THE LIFE OF
IMAM
ʿALĪ IBN ABĪ-ṬĀLIB

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The Life of Ali Ibn Abi Talib

This text is an extensive biography of the life of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) and the history of the early days of Islam; a section is dedicated to the life of The Imam ('a) and another dedicated to his traditions, his words, deeds and judgments. The Appendix contains the history of his shrine and the acts and supplications to be performed during its visitation.

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Translator’s Foreword

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The personality of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (‘a) is too great to comprehend in a single book, because it has so many sides; each one of which requires a multi-volume book to cover. Throughout his blessed lifetime, Imam Ali (‘a) represented the truth as flawlessly as sociologists desired. He treated almost all of the social defects, he thought, would affect any society.

Unfortunately, the people among whom Imam Ali lived had formed a primitive society whose individuals relied upon power instead of motive and civility, to lead their lives. Such was the community of the Arabian Peninsula in which Imam Ali (‘a) grew up.

Since the early years of his life, Imam Ali (‘a) was embraced and brought up by the ever greatest personality known by humanity; namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) who brought him up on idealities and mental and physical perfections. The Imam (‘a)

thus proved to be a great and righteous role model to the humanity.

This book is a translation of the eleven-volume book entitled *Mawsu'at Al-Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin Ali Ibn Abi Talib,* written by the well-versed scholar Sheikh Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi. However, I, the translator, tried to translate the ideas of the book excluding the compositions and irrelevant topics. As a result, the English version of the book has come in one volume only.

The book is divided into two major sections; one dedicated to the life account of Imam Ali ('a), and the other to his traditions including his words, deeds, and judgments.

In other words, the first section of the book deals with the details of the life of Imam Ali ('a) from birth till death or, as expressed by scholars, from cradle to burial place.

The second part is further split into chapters. Each chapter touches a definite aspect of the Imam's activities and reformative plans. Hence, topics like remarks of Imam Ali in the Holy Quran and the prophetic traditions, his commentaries on some verses of Holy Quran, his educational teachings, his sermons, his aphorisms, his judgments, his knowledge, his concentration on learning, his prophecies, his debates, and his supplications, all have been discussed in independent chapters of the second part of the book.

Finally, I hope the kind reader will learn something new about the great personality of Imam Ali ('a) and will try to follow his example. Without doubt, the right track will lead to welfare of this life and the next.

I hope that the dear readers excuse the mistakes made in this book. They are definitely not intentional though.

Badr Shahin
April 2010

Preface

The painstaking striving of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) and the struggle of his successor Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib Amir Al-Mu'minin (‘a) were the one and only source of the rays of light that illumined the Arabian Peninsula and whose brilliant waves extended to include all nations and peoples of the entire world, carrying all-inclusive liberty to human thought, will, and behavior, and proffering an advanced method and a comprehensive reformation that embraces all aspects of life, counting spread of knowledge, eradication of ignorance, development of intellects, and raising of man’s level from evils of this life to a life thriving with cognizance and illumination.

The doctrine of monotheism the most sublime word that involves all sorts of human liberty and casts the die of all sorts of servitude to other than Almighty Allah was launched on the tongue of the Holy Prophet (S) who adopted and declared it in Makkah.

The ensign of this word was borne by Imam Ali, the Holy Prophet’s successor and door to his city of knowledge, who swung with it in the space of Makkah; the center of idolatry and the heart of ignorance and superstitions.

Defending their superstitious beliefs, the people of Makkah confronted the Holy Prophet, concurring to extinguish the illumination of his Divine light and enfolding the ensign of the Holy Quran in order to take humanity back to the era of ignorance.

Yet, the immortal hero of Islam; namely Imam Ali (‘a), took upon himself the mission of protecting the Holy Prophet (S), availing himself of his matchless courage. He was thus the striking power that stood in the side of the Holy Prophet and defended him against those beasts.

Neither in the Muslim world nor in any other world can you find a personality matching the personality of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib

in talents, geniuses, and other faculties that comprehended all languages spoken by the inhabitants of this planet, making all scientists and men of rationality unable to stop talking about him with full respect and admiration.

In addition to full acquaintance with the secrets of the Muslim jurisprudence and laws of Islam, Imam Ali's knowledge ability included all sciences of this universe. He thus says, 'Ask me about the ways of the skies, for I know them better than I know the ways of this earth.'

Through his uncountable sciences and faculties, this great personality worked for establishing edifices of knowledge and sciences in the eastern part of this globe, but the same ignorant tyrants who had stood against his cousin the Holy Prophet stood also in the face of his expectations and spared no effort in frustrating his efforts.

One of the most important expectations of Imam Ali ('a) was the establishment of a system of rule founded on pure justice and untainted fairness. He therefore endeavored to distributing the fortunes of Almighty Allah among all humans equally and eradicating poverty and misery. He was thus the brother of the poor, the father of the miserable, and the hope of the deprived.

Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) was the first oppressed person in Islam. Ordeals and crises attacked him successively immediately after the passing away of his cousin. The malicious powers thus shouted in his face, Prophet Hood and leadership (of the Muslim community) must never be held by the same family!'

He was therefore driven away from his divinely commissioned position of leadership, forcing him to confine himself to his house and canceling all the privileges that the Holy Prophet (S) gave to him within earshot of all Muslims.

However, when the position of Caliphate led itself eventually to him, the tyrannical powers of Quraysh could not stand this fact,

because they were certain that this man of absolute justice would deprive them of their undeserved privileges and of the fortunes that they had unrightfully seized from the public treasury of the Muslim State.

They therefore recruited all their financial and political powers to overthrow his government. From the first ray of the dawn of Islam, Imam Ali ('a) was the very person who directed to them shattering blows and filled in their houses with wailings and mourning's. Imam Ali ('a) was therefore their vehement enemy before and after he became the leader of the Muslim State.

The history of Imam Ali ('a) is strongly connected to the history of the Holy Prophet (S) in particular and the history of Islam in general. Since childhood, he was brought up by the Holy Prophet (S) and he was a chief branch of the blessed tree of Prophet Hood whose origin is fixed and whose branches are in the heavens, as expressed by the Holy Quran.

The views of people in general have never varied about any personality in the history of humanity as they did about the personality of Imam Ali ('a). Some people adored him so exaggeratedly that they worshiped him, while others went too far in invoking his animosity and hating him that they tried to extinguish not only his light but also any ray that claimed belonging to him. At any rate, all Muslims agree unanimously that those who hate Imam Ali ('a) are infidels, straying off the path of Islam, and lacking any share in this religion.

To conclude, each aspect of the personality of Imam Ali ('a) is too far- reaching to be comprehended in a single book. If truth be told, this personality requires tens of volumes to comprehend.

Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi
Holy Najaf

Section 1: The Life Account Of Imam Ali

Early Life And Virtues Of Imam Ali

All constituents of distinction and dignity can be found convened in the lineage of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) who belongs to the family of Hashim that is well-known for nobility, gallantry, hospi-Talibty, and all features of righteousness that may be ascribed to a family.

Historians have mentioned some noble exploits of this family since its coming into being. While idolatry was the prevailing religion among the tribes of Makkah where giant idols were hanged on the walls of the Holy Ka’bah, the family of Hashim was the one and only family that professed monotheism and worshipped Almighty Allah, the God of Prophet Abraham. Referring to this fact, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

By Allah I swear this! Neither my father nor did my grandfather’s Abd Al- Muttalib, Abd-Manaf, and Hashim, worship any idol; rather, they worshipped Almighty Allah and performed prayers, turning their faces to the Holy House (i.e. Ka’bah), following the religion of Prophet Abraham, and adhering to it’[1]

Because the descendants of Hashim represented chivalry, intrepidity, and nobility, they were chief parties in the famous Hilf Al-Fudul Pact one of whose paragraphs was to help the oppressed people, be they from the tribe of Quraysh or any other tribe. The Holy Prophet (S) himself witnessed this pact and gloried himself on it.

Another sign of pride and glory for the Hashimites was the digging of Zamzam Spring after it had been wiped out for a long time. Although all people of Quraysh made big efforts to find this spring, all their attempts failed until Abd Al-Muttalib, the chief of the Hashimites, could find it along with a treasure of two golden gazelles, swords, and armors.

When they disputed about the possession of that treasure, Abd Al-Muttalib decided that the gold should be re-molded and put on the gate of the Holy Ka'bah.

Having been forerunners to every act of public benefit, the Hashimites applied themselves to supplying all the pilgrims to the Holy Ka'bah with water generously. They also used to serve all strangers and poor people with food.

These charitable attributes could easily found themselves spacious places in the selves of the descendants of Hashim all over ages. Hence, Imam Ali ('a) was the most evident example of these attributes that added up to his unique personality.

Celebrated Chiefs Of The Hashimites

Hashim

The most honorable personality of Makkah, Hashim was the epitome of generosity as he used to serve the pilgrims with food in Makkah, Mina, and on Mount Arafat.[2] He was the first to decide two journeys a year for the people of Quraysh; one to Yemen and one to Syria.[3]

Abd Al-Muttalib

One of the chiefs and objects of pride for the Hashimites, Abd Al-Muttalib was the noblest in his youth and the solemnest in old age. He was so praised and extolled that he was nicknamed Shay-

bat Al-Hamd, or the praised gray- haired chief.4 Although he had faced many hardships in gathering fresh water, he did not stop serving the pilgrims to the Holy Ka'bah with water.

Abu Talib

The father of Imam Ali ('a), Abu Talib is considered the foremost defender of Islam and the greatest vindicator of the Holy Prophet's promulgation for this religion. Without the protection of Abu Talib, the Holy Prophet (S) could not have conveyed the message of his Lord and could not have stood in the face of these rivals, underestimating their powers, disgracing their idols, and deriding their traditions and customs.

Abu Talib took much care of the Holy Prophet (S) and took upon himself the mission of bringing him up from childhood after the demise of his father, grandfather, and mother. On one of his journeys to Syria, Abu Talib accompanied his nephew, Muhammad, to teach him the principles of commerce.

Once his eyes fell on the Holy Prophet (S), a priest hurried to Abu Talib and said, 'I advise you to take your nephew and return home, even if this will cause you loss of your money and trade. I cannot guarantee that he will be saved from the trickeries of the polytheists and the Jews who, if they find out what I have just found out about this man, will not cease causing him harm; rather, they will assassinate him and nothing will stop them from doing so.'5

Once he heard these words, Abu Talib interrupted his trade journey and went back home so as to safeguard his nephew. Moreover, he was so vigilant over his nephew that he used to make him sleep next to him 6 and move him from one place to another in the darkest hour of night lest he would be assassinated.

Abu Talib; The Defender Of Islam

When the Holy Prophet (S) proclaimed his immortal call that aimed at liberating and saving man from the murk of ignorance and from paganism, the entire tribe of Quraysh embarked upon standing against him in order to extinguish the torch of Monotheism. In the face of this unanimity of Quraysh in antagonizing the Holy Prophet (S), Abu Talib, the true hero of Islam, took upon himself the mission of protecting his nephew.

He furthermore used to buoy up the spirits of the Holy Prophet (S) and encourage him to be steadfast in his promulgation for the religion of Almighty Allah. In this respect, Abu Talib composed numerous poetic verses that demonstrated his profound belief in Islam and his backing up and protecting the Holy Prophet (S) whatever sacrifices this matter would cost.

Other poetic verses revealed that Abu Talib would always and under all circumstances support his nephew and would never allow the polytheists to assault or set about him.

Describing the Holy Prophet (S) in one of his poetic lines, Abu Talib said:

He is white-faced and by his face rain is prayed. He is the shelter of the orphans and the guardian of the widows.

This very poetic line left a great impact on the Holy Prophet's menTalibty. It is reported that Al-Madinah, the city of Yathrib that was taken as the capital of the Muslim State, was once afflicted with harsh aridity about which its people complained to the Holy Prophet (S).

Responding to them, the Holy Prophet (S) implored Almighty Allah for rain and it was no sooner that it rained. Pleased by this situation, the Holy Prophet (S) said, 'Had Abu Talib witnessed this, he would have been pleased.' As he understood the meaning of the Holy Prophet's saying, Imam Ali ('a) said, 'This is an indication of my father's poetic line about you.' He meant the previously mentioned poetic verse.

The other members of the Holy Prophet's household were also touched by this poetic verse. At the last hour of the Prophet's life-time, Lady Fatimah ('a) repeated this poetic verse before him and he said, 'This is my uncle's composition.' He (S) then quoted this verse of the Holy Quran:

Muhammad is no more than a messenger. The messengers have already passed away before him. If then he dies or is killed will you turn back upon your heels? Whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allah in the least and Allah will reward the grateful. (3:144) 7

Back to the history of Abu Talib, some heads of Quraysh came to him and offered to give him in custody one of their noblest and most handsome heroes; namely, Imarah ibn Al-Walid, if he would give up the Holy Prophet (S) so that they would be able to assassinate him.

In response, Abu Talib ridiculed their offer and shouted at them with these words:

No, by God! You, the bunch of idiot ones, have not been fair! Fie on you and woe to you! Do you want me to give you my soul and son so that you will kill him and, in return, you give me your son so that I raise him for you? What is the matter with you?

How do you judge? Do you expect me to agree on replacing Muhammad with Imarah? I swear by Him Who grasps my soul that if you give me the whole world, I will never accept it as substitute for even a single nail from Muhammad's foot. Go away from me and never speak to me; otherwise, I will make my sword play on your heads!

The chiefs of the polytheists of Quraysh followed a new stratagem against the Holy Prophet (S) and his relatives and followers. They banished them to an open area out of Makkah and imposed a social and economic siege on them. During this detention, the poly-

theists made many attempts to assassinate the Holy Prophet (S), but Abu Talib asked his son Ali to guard the Holy Prophet (S) by replacing him in his bed.

This siege lasted for three years during which Lady Khadijah, the Holy Prophet's first and best wife and Lady Fatimah's mother, used to supply them with their needs of food and drink until she spent her entire fortune, which was so big, during these years of siege until Almighty Allah relieved the Muslims from this ordeal.

Abu Talib played a positive and distinctive role in the promulgation for Islam. One of his activities was that he wrote a message to the king of Abyssinia inviting him to this religion.8

He also proclaimed the virtues of the Holy Prophet (S) and spread his high merits and calibers. In this respect, he composed many poems.9

In conclusion, without the efforts of Abu Talib, Islam could not have achieved victory. It is therefore unappreciative to ignore his favors to Islam and Muslims.

Abu Talib's Last Will

When he felt that death was approaching him, Abu Talib wrote an immortal will in which he instructed his sons and family members to adhere to the nobilities of character, to show loyalty to, and to defend the Holy Prophet (S).

He thus said:

I instruct you with regard to Muhammad, the most honest of all the people of Quraysh and the most truthful of all the Arabs' Show loyalty to him and be his defenders. By Allah I swear this: no one follows the course of Muhammad but that he will most certainly be guided to the true path and no one adheres to him but that he will find pleasure.

If there will be any more days of my lifetime, I will most certainly protect him against any misfortune and ward off from him any conspiracy. However, I do bear witness to the truth of what he says and I do deem true all that which he says. 10

The news of Abu Talib's death depressed the believers and pleased the polytheists. Among the most depressive ones for this news was his son Ali who hurried to bathe his father's dead body ceremonially and put him in his shroud with teary eyes and stricken heart.

At the edge of his uncle's grave, the Holy Prophet (S) stopped gloomy and overcast, and eulogized him with these words:

O uncle! May you receive good regard from your relatives! May you be awarded abundantly! You did raise and guard me when I was little and support and sustain me when I was advanced in years. By Allah I swear this: I will most certainly implore God's forgiveness for you and I will intercede for you in such a way that will astonish both men and jinn. 11

Expressing his deep sadness for losing his uncle, the Holy Prophet (S) called the year on which Abu Talib departed life as the year of sadness *('am Alhuzn).*

By the loss of Abu Talib, the tyrants of Quraysh deemed the Holy Prophet (S) helpless and started annoying him using various means.

About this stage of his blessed life, the Holy Prophet (S) declared:

The people of Quraysh could not do me any harm until Abu Talib passed away. 12

Such attempts reached the climax when these polytheists agreed on assassinating the Holy Prophet (S) collectively, by sending a man from each tribe to kill him in his bed. Having been informed by Almighty Allah about this plot, the Holy Prophet (S) had to

flee his homeland at night, leaving his cousin and successor, Imam Ali (‘a), to take his place in his bed.

One of the distinctive features of Imam Ali (‘a) is that he is the son of the protector of Islam who defended this fresh religion in its early stages.

Fatimah Bint Asad; Imam Ali’s Mother

Lady Fatimah bint (daughter of) Asad was one of the doyennes of her time in chastity, immaculacy, and dignity. She was one of the first women to embrace Islam. More specifically, she was the eleventh person to join this great religion.13

She was also the first woman to pay homage to the Holy Prophet (S) when he asked women to make covenant with him that they would be always chaste, pure, and abstinent from evil.14

She played a vital role in serving the Holy Prophet (S), since she preferred him to her sons in custody and tenderness. In return, the Holy Prophet (S) used to treat her honorably and called her as his mother.

Scholars of *Hadith* (i.e. the Holy Prophet’s sayings and doings) consider this virtuous lady to be one of those who reported the Holy Prophet’s discourses and traditions. She was then the reporter of forty-six traditions although Muslim Al-Nayshaburi and Al-Bukhari, the compilers of the most reliable books of Hadith for Sunnis, have reported from her one unanimously agreed upon tradition only.

She lived in the house of Imam Ali (‘a) rather than his other brothers. When he married Lady Fatimah (‘a), Imam Ali (‘a) asked his mother to stay with her, saying,

You may bring water and settle the needs that require leaving the house, while Fatimah will work inside the house such as grinding the flour and making bread.

When this great lady was afflicted by ailments, Lady Fatimah (‘a) used to look after her until she departed life. Her son, Imam Ali (‘a), prepared for her funeral processions and then informed the Holy Prophet (S) about her death. Deeply saddened by this news, the Holy Prophet (S) ordered Imam Ali (‘a) to dress his mother the Prophet’s shirt as shroud and he himself managed her funeral ceremony and when a grave was dug, he laid down in that grave for several moments.

He then eulogized her with excellent words and prayed to the Lord to cover her with His mercy and pleasure as recompense for the kindness and compassion she had shown to him.

When he was asked why he had done so, the Holy Prophet (S) answered:

After Abu Talib, nobody was more compassionate to me than this woman. I have ordered that my shirt should be shrouded on her body so that she will be dressed from the garments of Paradise, and I laid down in her grave so that interrogation will be made easy for her.15

Another distinctive feature of Imam Ali (‘a) is that this virtuous lady who took the lead in believing in Almighty Allah and the Holy Prophet (S) and spared no single effort in serving him was his mother. Undoubtedly, Imam Ali (‘a) must have inherited her virtues and high qualities in the same way as he had inherited his fathers’ qualities who improved on all the Arabs.

The Born In The Ka’bah

The unquestionable fact upon which all historians and traditionists have agreed unanimously is that Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a)

was born inside the Holy Ka'bah[16] and none before or after him was born in this place.

Beyond doubt, this is one of the clear-cut signs of Imam Ali's superiority and great standing in the view of Almighty Allah Who chose for his birth the most blessed place on the earth.

Describing Imam Ali's birth in this holy place, historians and traditions say that when Lady Fatimah bint Asad felt the throes of childbirth, she, breathless and with full confidence that her fetus would enjoy a great standing in the view of Almighty Allah, hurried towards the Holy Ka'bah.

When she arrived there, she directed all her emotions towards the Lord and prayed to Him to make easy her deliverance. She then hanged to the curtains of the Holy Ka'bah and said this supplicatory prayer:

O Lord, I do believe in You and in the Messengers and Books that have been brought from You. I also give full credence to the words of my grandfather Abraham who built this house. I now beseech You in the name of him who built this house and in the name of the fetus I am carrying in my womb to make easy my deliverance of this fetus.[17]

No sooner did she finished these words than the wall of the Holy Ka'bah was rent as under and she found herself entering inside it from that rent, repeating words of glorification of Almighty Allah and having full confidence that the fetus to whom she was about to give birth would be a great person.

After a short while of staying in that holy place, Lady Fatimah bint Asad give birth to the blessed newborn who would surround the world with his talents and genius.

At the first look at her newborn, the mother noticed the clear-cut signs of courage and valor in his face and noticed the soundness of his body. She therefore gave him the name of Haydarah, which

is one of the Arabic names of lion. This prediction was very true; Ali was the lion of Almighty Allah and His Messenger. With his sword, he decapitated the most courageous men of the Arab polytheists for the sake of Islam.

Having taken pride in this name on many occasions, Imam Ali (‘a) used to say just before combating the strongest men of the polytheists,

I am the one whom was called Haydarah by my mother. I am thus like the powerful and attacking lion.

When his father was informed of the coming of his newborn, he entered the Holy Ka’bah and implored Almighty Allah to inspire to him the name he would say to his son. As a result, Almighty Allah inspired to him to name his newborn Ali. Immediately after that, Abu Talib went out of the Holy Ka’bah declaring that he had called this name to his newborn - a name that denotes highness and superiority.

Imam Ali (‘a) was born on Friday, the thirteenth of Rajab, thirty years after the Elephant Year. According to the Gregorian calendar, he was born in 600 AD, twelve years before the messenger ship of the Holy Prophet (S).

- 1. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Ikmal Al-Din, pp. 104.
- 2. Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyyah 3:485.
- 3. Tarikh Al-Tabari 2:180.
- 4. Tarikh Al-Tabari 2:180.
- 5. Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyyah 1:90.
- 6. Al-Sirah Al-Halabiyyah 1:40.
- 7. Al-Baghdadi, Khuzanat Al-Adab 2:96.
- 8. Ibn Hisham, Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyyah 1:357; Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 3:224.
- 9. Al-Amini, Iman Abi Talib, pp. 189.
- 10. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:213; Sadr Al-Din Al-Shirazi, Al-Darajat Al-Rafi’ah, pp. 61; Al-Jazri (a

Shafi'ite scholar), Asna Al-MaTalibb, pp. 20; Al-kamawi, Thamarat Al-Awraq, pp. 294.

- 11. Ibn Hammadi, Abu Talib wa-Banuh, pp. 103.
- 12. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 2:34.
- 13. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:14.
- 14. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:14.
- 15. Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat Al-Sahabah 5:510; Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab 4:269; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:14; Abu-Na'im, Ma'rifat Al-Sahabah 1:279.
- 16. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:483.
  On this event, the author comments: 'Reports have uninterruptedly confirmed that Lady
  Fatimah bint Asad gave birth of Imam Ali inside the Holy Ka'bah. This fact has been also reported in the following reference books:
  Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 2:2; Ibn Al-Sabbagh Al-Maliki, Al-Fusul Al-Muhimmah, pp.14; Muhammad ibn Talhah (the Shafi'ite), MaTalibb Al-Sa'ul, pp. 11; Sibt Ibn Al-Jawzi, Tadhkirat Al-Khawass, pp. 7; Al-Shanqiti, Kifayat Al-Talibb, pp. 37; Al-Shabalnaji, Nur Al- Absar, pp. 76; Abd Al-Rahman Al-Saffuri (Shafi'ite), Nuzhat Al-Majalis 2:204; Shaykh Ali Al-Qawi (the kanbalite), SharhAl-Shafa 1:151; Ali Al-kalabi (the Shafi'ite), Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyyah 1:150; Al-Bardawani, Rawa'ih Al-Mustafa, pp. 10; 'Ala' Al-Din Al-Katwari, Muhadarat Al-Awa'il, pp. 120; Abd Al-kaqq Al-Dahlawi, Ghayat Al-Ikhtisar, pp. 97; Mustafa Al-'Aqqad, 'Abqariyyat Al-Imam Ali, pp. 38.
- 17. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 35:8.

Nicknames Of Imam Ali

A nickname is the name that is given to or acquired by somebody in the course of his life to express his characteristics or to confer honor upon him. In the light of this definition, Imam Ali ('a) was given many nicknames as an honor and an expression of his dis-

tinctive characteristics.
Hereinafter, let us refer to a number of these nicknames:

Siddiq (Veracious)

Given to him by the Holy Prophet (S),1 this nickname demonstrates the fact that Imam Ali (‘a) was the first to believe and have faith in the Holy Prophet (S) in all of what he conveyed from Almighty Allah. Imam Ali (‘a) embraced Islam before everyone else had done. In this regard, he declared,

I am the greatest veracious one who confirmed to the truth. I believed in Allah before Abu-Bakr had believed and I embraced Islam before he had embraced it. 2

During his lifetime, Imam Ali (‘a) was famously known of this nickname. Addressing Imam Ali (‘a), Malik Al-Ashtar said,

You are the greatest veracious one.

Wasi (Successor Of The Prophet)

Amongst the noblest nicknames given to Imam Ali (‘a) is Wasi , which entails that he is the successor and the entrusted trustee of the Prophet (S). In many of his discourses some of which will be cited hereinafter, the Holy Prophet (S) addressed this nickname to Imam Ali (‘a):

Referring to Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

This is my successor, the keeper of my secrets, and the best one I may leave behind me. 3

On another occasion, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

Ali ibn Abi Talibis my successor, the keeper of my secrets, the best one I may leave behind me, and the fulfiller of my promises. 4

One day, Salman Al-Farisi asked the Holy Prophet (S) to name his successor. 'Who was the successor of Moses?' Asked the Holy Prophet (S). 'He was Joshua the son of Nun,' answered Salman. The Prophet (S) then declared,

Verily, my successor and inheritor who will settle my debts and fulfill my promises is Ali ibn Abi Talib. 5

Having learnt it from the Holy Prophet (S), the people over ages of the Islamic history called this nickname to Imam Ali ('a). Among such ones were poets of different ages like Khuzaymah ibn Thabit, Abd Al-Rahman Al-Jamahi, Jarir ibn Abdullah Al-Bujali, Sa'id ibn Qays, Hujr ibn 'Adi, Al-Nu'man ibn 'Ajlan, Abu'l-Aswad Al-Du'ali, Al-Fasl ibn 'Abbas, Al-Kumayt, Al-Mutanabbi, Abu- Tammam Al-ta'i, and Di'bil Al-Khuza'i.

Faruq (Distinguisher)

Meaning the discriminating between the right and the wrong, the nickname of Faruq was given to Imam Ali ('a) as derived from many Prophetic sayings some of which are as follows:

Abu-Dharr Al-Ghifari and Salman Al-Farisi reported that the Holy Prophet (S) took Imam Ali ('a) from the hand and declared,

This is the first to have believed in me and the first to shake hands with me on the Resurrection Day. This is the greatest veracious one (who confirmed to my truthfulness) and this is the distinguisher (Faruq) of this nation who discriminates the right from the wrong.6

Abu-Dharr has reported that he heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying to Imam Ali ('a),

You are the greatest veracious one and you are the distinguisher who discriminates the right from the wrong. 7

Abu-Layla Al-Ghifari has reported that he heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying,

After my departure, a seditious matter will come to pass. When this takes place, you should abide by Ali ibn Abi Talib, for he is the first to have believed in me, the first to shake hands with me on the Resurrection Day, the greatest veracious one, and the distinguisher of this nation.8

Ya'sub Al-Din (The Chief Of The Religion)

In Arabic language, the word ya'sub denotes the chief of the bees. However, this word is used to express the chief of a people. The Holy Prophet (S) gave this nickname to Imam Ali ('a) and called him so on many occasions, such as the following:

He (S) is reported to have said,

This (Ali) is the chief of the believers while money is the chief of the wrongdoers.9

On another occasion, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

Ali is the chief of the believers.

Abu-Sa'd has reported that he once visited Imam Ali ('a) and found some gold in front of him. Imam Ali ('a) thus referred to the gold and said,

I am the chief of the believers and this (gold) is the chief of the hypocrites. To me do the believers resort while to this do the hypocrites resort. 10

Wali (Guardian)

Another elevated nickname that Almighty Allah has given to Imam Ali (‘a) is Wali, which is a polysemous word meaning guardian, most preferred, friend, leader, and many others. Declaring Imam Ali (‘a) as the guardian, or chief, of the believers, the Holy Quran states,

Exclusively, your guardian is Allah, His messenger, and those who believe, who establish worship and pay the poor-due, and bow down in prayer. (5:55)

This holy Quranic verse was revealed in praise of Imam Ali (‘a) when he gave his ring as alms to a needy while he was bowing in a prayer. It has also restricted the general authority over all people to Almighty Allah, His Messenger, and the divinely designated Imam. It has also come in the plural form to express the great standing and the high rank of this authority; namely, the Imam.

Laying more stress on the significance of this restriction of authority, the verse has come in the form of a nominal clause rather than verbal. In addition, the verse begins with an article of restriction in Arabic, which is the article *innama* (only, or exclusively).

From his side, the Holy Prophet (S) imparted the name Wali to Imam Ali (‘a) in a big number of his sayings, some of which are the following:

Ibn ‘Abbas has reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying to Imam Ali (‘a):

You are verily the Wali (authority) over all believers after me.11

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying to him:

I have beseeched Allah to grant me five things with regard to you; He has thus granted me four and rejected one: You will be

the first to come out of your grave on the Resurrection Day, you will always be with me, the Standard of Praise will be held and carried by you, and you will be the Wali of the believers after me. 12

Al-Nasa'i has reported through a chain of authority that some people complained to the Holy Prophet (S) against Imam Ali (‘a). Agonized and deeply infuriated, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

What do you want from Ali? Verily, Ali is part of me and I am part of him. He is the Wali of all believers after me. 13

In brief, Wali is the person who has authority over everyone and the one who has the right to manage the affairs of those who are under his authority.

Amir Al-Mu' Minin (The Leader Of The Believers)

This nickname is attributed to Imam Ali (‘a) so commonly that whenever it is said, it must refer to him.

Dr. Zaki Mubarak says,

Amir Al-Mu'minin is the terminological nickname of Ali ibn Abi Talib. Whenever a reader of an ancient book finds this nickname unattached to a certain person, it must be known that the intended in Ali (‘a).

This nickname was given to Imam Ali (‘a) by the Holy Prophet (S) too:

Abu-Na’im has reported through a chain of authority that the Holy Prophet (S) once said to Anas,

The first to enter from this door is the Leader of the Believers (Amir Al- Mu'minin), the master of the Muslims, the leader of

the marked and white-forehead ones, and the seal of the Prophets' successors. 14

Anas said: At that moment, I prayed Allah, covertly, to make him one of the Ansar (the people of Yathrib to which Anas belonged). Immediately after that, Ali entered. 'Who is it, Anas?' asked the Prophet (S). 'It is Ali,' answered I.

Once he heard this answer, the Prophet (S) stood up with glad mien, embraced Ali, and rubbed the sweat of his face over Ali's face and the sweat of Ali's face over his face.

Upon this situation, Imam Ali ('a) said, 'O Allah's Messenger, you are doing to me a thing that you have not done before.'

The Holy Prophet (S), answering him, said, 'Why should I not do it when you are the one who will represent me? You are the only one who conveys to them my sayings and explains for them what they will disagree about after me.'15

Amin (Trustee)

Because Imam Ali ('a) was entrusted with the affairs of the religion and the secrets of the Holy Prophet (S), he was given this name by the Holy Prophet (S) who is reported to have said to him,

O Ali, you are my choicest and trustee.16

Hadi (Guide)

Imam Ali ('a) was the guide of all Muslims, the director of the pious, and the guardian of the believers. He was therefore given the nickname Hadi, which is derived from the Holy Prophet's saying to him,

I am the warner and Ali is the guide (Hadi). By your guidance, O Ali, those who follow the true guidance shall be guided.[17]

This tradition has been always attached to the exegesis of the following holy verse:

You are only a warner and there is a guide for every people. (13:7)

Udhun Wa'iyah (Retaining Ear)

One of the honorable nicknames of Imam Ali ('a) is the Retaining Ear, because he retained all that which was revealed from the Heavens to the Holy Prophet (S).

A reference has been made to the Retaining Ear in the Holy Quran that reads:

The retaining ear might retain it. (69:12)

Upon receiving this holy verse, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

I have asked my Lord to make this retaining ear to be Ali's ear.

After that, Imam Ali ('a) used to say,

I have never forgotten anything after this imploration of the Holy Prophet (S) although it is improper for me to forget.[18]

Al-Murtadha (The Well-Pleased)

Imam Ali ('a) has been given the nickname of Al-Murtadha, because Almighty Allah has accepted him pleasingly to be the Holy Prophet's successor and vicegerent, or because Almighty Allah has accepted him pleasingly to be the husband of Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra', the doyenne of the women of the world.[19]

Al-Anza' Al-Batin (The Corpulent Baldhead)

Among his physical features, Imam Ali ('a) lacked hair on the front part of his scalp and he had big abdomen that was not on account of gluttony.

One day, a man asked Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, saying, 'Please, tell me about the corpulent baldheaded man about whom the people of this nation disputed.'

Abdullah answered:

O man! You have asked me about a man better than whom no other man, except the Messenger of Allah, has ever trodden the pebbles of this earth. He was unquestionably the brother of Allah's Messenger, his cousin, his successor, and his vicegerent among the individuals of his nation.

He was totally free from (i.e. Anza ') polytheism and well-versed (i.e. batin) in knowledge. I did hear the Messenger of Allah saying, **'He that desires for deliverance in the morrow, must show full obedience to this baldheaded man (i.e. Imam Ali).'**[20]

According to this tradition, the word Anza' stands for freedom from polytheism and the word batin well-versedness in knowledge.

Al-Sharif (The Honorable)

Imam Ali ('a) was the most honorable in lineage, ideality, abstinence from violating Almighty Allah's prohibitions, and piety. Even his enemies and opponents testified to his most honorableness. Historicists have related that when the army of the 'Abbasids besieged Marwan, the last of the Umayyad rulers, he said to one of his viziers, 'This army needs Ali.'

Objecting to this, the vizier said, 'How come! Ali alone is an army!' Marwan explained, 'You have not understood what I meant. I mean that they need Ali's honorableness and nobility. If they seize us, they will annihilate our women, children, and old people. They will leave no single one of us alive. If Ali were the commander of this army, he would never do such things to us, because his honor and nobility would prevent him from so.'21

Marwan's words were totally true. When the 'Abbasids came to power, they annihilated all the individuals of the Umayyad dynasty, including the bodies of the dead among them.

Baydat Al-Balad (The Unique Person)

Like his father who was nicknamed Baydat Makkah because he was the source of its dignity and honor, Imam Ali ('a) was nicknamed Baydat Al- Balad for the same reasons.22

Khayr Al-Bashar (The Best Of Humankind)

This nickname was given to Imam Ali ('a) by the Holy Prophet (S) through a big number of Prophetic traditions some of which are as follows:

Jabir ibn Abdullah reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

Ali is the best of all human beings. He who doubts about it has in fact lost faith in Islam.23

Ali is the best of all human beings. He who suspects has in fact lost faith in Islam.24

Imam Ali ('a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

Whoever refrains from confessing that Ali is the best of all human beings has in fact had no faith in Islam.[25]

Sayyid Al-'Arab (The Master Of All Arabs)

Sayyid Al-Arab is another nickname of Imam Ali ('a) that was given to him by the Holy Prophet (S) who is reported to have said,

I am the master of the descendants of Adam while Ali is the master of all Arabs. [26]

'A'ishah reported that the Holy Prophet (S), once, said, 'Summon the master of the Arabs.' 'Is it not that you, O Allah's Messenger, are the master of the Arabs?' asked 'A'ishah. The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

I am the master of the descendants of Adam while Ali is the master of all Arabs. [27]

Salamah ibn Kuhayl has reported that Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a), once, passed by the Holy Prophet (S) next to him 'A'ishah was sitting. The Holy Prophet (S) then said to 'A'ishah,

If it pleases you to see the master of the Arabs, you may look at Ali ibn Abi Talib.

'A'ishah answered, 'O Allah's Prophet! Is it not that you are the master of the Arabs?'

The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

I am the leader of the Muslims and the master of the pious ones. But if it pleases you to see the master of the Arabs, you may look at Ali ibn Abi- Talibb.[28]

Hujjat Allah (The Argument Of God)

One of the greatest nicknames of Imam Ali (‘a) is Hujjat Allah, because he is the argument of Almighty Allah against His creatures in the sense that he guides the creatures to the straightest path of God and illuminates the paths of true guidance before them. This nickname was also given to him by the Holy Prophet (S) who is reported to have said,

Ali and I are the arguments of Allah against His creatures.29

Anas ibn Malik has reported that he was once in the presence of the Holy Prophet (S) who, upon seeing Ali ibn Abi Talib coming, said to him (i.e. Anas),

This coming man is my argument against my people on the Resurrection Day.30

- 1. Al-Diyarbakri, Tarikh Al-Khamis 2:275.
- 2. Ahmad ibn Abdullah At-Tabari, Dhakha’ir Al-’Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi’l-Qurba, pp. 58; Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Ma’arif, pp. 73; Muhibb Al-Din At-Tabari, Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah fi Fada’il Al-’Asharah 2:257.
- 3. Ibn kajar, Tahdhib Al-Tahdhib 3:106.
- 4. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:154.
- 5. Muhibb Al-Din At-Tabari, Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah fi Fada’il Al-’Asharah 2:178.
- 6. Nur Al-Din Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa'id wa Manba’ Al-Fawa'id 9:102; Al-Mannawi, Fays Al-Qadir 4:358; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:156; Al-Nasa'i, Fada’il Al-Sahabah 1:296.
- 7. Muhibb Al-Din At-Tabari, Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah fi Fada’il Al-’Asharah 2:655.
- 8. Ibn kajar Al-’Asqalani, Al-Isabah fi Tamyiz Al-Sahabah 7:167; Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al- Ghabah fi Ma’rifat Al-Sahabah 5:287; Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab 2:657.
- 9. Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa'id 9:102.

- 10. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:394; Ibn kajar, Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah, pp. 75. The author of Tarikh Al-Khamis states in 2:375, 'Imam Ali was nicknamed the chief of the Imams.'
- 11. Sunan Abi-Dawud 1:360.
- 12. Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 4:339.
- 13. Al-Nasa'i, Khasa'is Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 19: Muhibb Al-Din At-Tabari, Al-Riyad Al- Nasirah fi Fada'il Al-'Asharah 2:171; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:194; Abu-Na'im, Ma'rifat Al-Sahabah 1:296.
- 14. Zaki Mubarak, 'Abqariyyat Al-Sharif Al-Rasi 2:228.
- 15. Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 1:63.
- 16. Ahmad ibn Abdullah At-Tabari, Dhakha'ir Al-'Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi'l-Qurba, pp. 57; Al-Diyarbakri, Tarikh Al-Khamis 2:375.
- 17. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahi-hayn 3:129; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi,
  Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:157.
- 18. Tafsir At-Tabari 29:35; Al-Zamakhshari, Tafsir Al-Kashshaf 4:600 (Exegesis of verse 13 of Surah (Chapter) Al-kaqqah; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:108; Al-Suyuti, Al- Durr Al-Manthur 8:267.
- 19. Ahmad ibn Abdullah At-Tabari, Dhakha'ir Al-'Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi'l-Qurba, pp. 32;
  Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:152.
- 20. Hayat Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 45.
- 21. Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi, Hayat Al-Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (The Life of Imam Musa ibn
  Ja'far) 1:336.
- 22. Al-Diyarbakri, Tarikh Al-Khamis 5:375; Abu-Na'im, Ma'rifat Al-Sahabah 1:297; Al- Jahis, Hayat Al-Hayawan 2:336.
- 23. Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 7:421.
- 24. Al-Mannawi, Kunuz Al-Haqa'iq, pp. 92.
- 25. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahi-hayn 3:124; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi,
  Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:157, Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 1:63.

- 26. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:157; Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 1:63.
- 27. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:124.
- 28. Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 11:89.
- 29. Al-Mannawi, Kunuz Al-Haqa'iq, pp. 43.
- 30. Muhibb Al-Din At-Tabari, Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah fi Fada'il Al-'Asharah 2:193.

Kunyahs Of Imam Ali

Imam Ali ('a) was given many kunyahs (i.e. an agnomen given as an honor, usually starting with abu; the father of') some of which are as follows:

Abu'l-Rayhanatayn (The Father Of The Two Basils)

The two basils whose father is Imam Ali ('a) were Imam Al-Hasan and Imam Al-Husayn, the two chiefs of the youths of Paradise. This *kunyah* was given to him by the Holy Prophet (S) who said to him,

O Father of the two basils! Soon will your two supports depart. It is Allah Who is my successor on you.

When the Holy Prophet (S) departed life, Imam Ali ('a) said, 'This is one of the two supports.' When Lady Fatimah ('a) departed life, he ('a) expressed,

'This is the other support.'1

Abu'l-Sibtayn (The Father Of The Two Grandsons)

Imam Al-Hasan and Imam Al-Husayn, the two grandsons of the Holy Prophet (S), are the sons of Imam Ali (‘a) who was thus given this *kunyah*, which was also one of his most famous *kunyahs*.

Abu’l-Hasan (The Father Of Al-Hasan)

Imam Ali (‘a) was given this *kunyah,* because Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) was his eldest son and the most beloved of the Holy Prophet’s descendants.2

Abu’l-Husayn (The Father Of Al-Husayn)

Imam Ali (‘a) was given this *kunyah*, because Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) was his second son. He was actually the pride of Islam and the reviver of this religion. He sacrificed his soul for keeping Islam alive and for confronting its enemies all over ages.

Abu-Turab (The Father Of Dust)

Imam Ali (‘a) loved this *kunyah* very much because it was given to him by the Holy Prophet (S) on many occasions.

Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas has reported that when the Holy Prophet (S) brought into fraternal association between each couple of Muslim individuals one from the Muslims of Makkah who emigrated to Yathrib (i.e. *Muhajirun*) and another from Yathrib whose people supported and received the Holy Prophet (S) and the Muslims of Makkah (i.e. *Ansar*), he left Imam Ali (‘a) without appointing for him a brother.

Imam Ali (‘a) therefore felt so angry that he left the crowds and came to sleep at the bank of a stream. The Holy Prophet (S) then came out looking for him. When he found him, he kicked him with his foot and said,

Stand up! Nothing befits you more than being Abu-Turab (the father of dust). You have been angry with me because I held fraternity ties between each couple of *Muhajirun and Ansar* and I did not hold fraternity ties between you and anyone else. Does it not please you that your standing to me is the same as (Prophet) Aaron’s standing to (Prophet) Moses except that there will not be any prophet to come after me?

Behold! He that loves you shall be surrounded by security and true faith, but he that hates you shall die the death of the infidels who did not accept Islam and shall be interrogated for the deeds he has done in Islam.3

Imam Ali, the Leader of the Believers, has reported the following:

One day, the Messenger of Allah (S), having sought me out, found me sleeping on a bank of a stream. ‘What is this sleeping for?’ he said. ‘The people are calling you Abu-Turab (the father of dust).’ As he noticed that this word of him upset me, he said, ‘Stand up. By Allah, I will please you. You are my brother and the father of my sons. You will fight following my traditions and you will release me from my financial obligations’

He who dies in my lifetime will receive the compassion of Almighty Allah. He who dies in your lifetime will have accomplished his vow. Whoever dies loving you after your death, Almighty Allah will decide for him security and true faith everlastingly. Whoever dies hating you will die the death of those who did not accept Islam.4

It is reported that the Holy Prophet (S), once, found Imam Ali (‘a) and ‘Ammar sleeping on a soft ground. He moved Imam Ali (‘a) and said to him,

Get up, Abu-Turab! May I inform you of the most wretched of all people?

They are two:

(1) The red-faced killer of the she-camel of Prophet Salih, and

(2) The one who will strike you on your head, dying your beard with the blood of your head.5

Abu'l-Fasl Al-tufayl has reported that the Holy Prophet (S) came toward Ali, who was sleeping on the ground, and said to him,

Verily, the most appropriate of your names to you is *Abu-Turab* (the father of dust). You are truly the father of dust.6

Abd Al-'Aziz ibn Abi-kazim has reported on the authority of his father that he informed Sahl ibn Sa'd, one of the Sahabah (i.e. companions of the Holy Prophet), that the governor of Al-Madinah ordered him to revile at (Imam) Ali during the ritual sermon (*khutbah*). Answering him, Sahl said confusedly, 'What should I say? Should I say 'May Allah curse Abu-Turab?'

By Allah I swear this: this name was given to him by the Messenger of Allah' One day, Ali left his house and laid down in the shadow of the Mosque. Then, the Messenger of Allah (S) visited Ali's house and asked Fatimah ('a) about him. 'He is lying down in the shadow of the Mosque,' she answered. When the Messenger of Allah (S) came towards Ali, he found his garment falling from his back, causing the dust to cover his entire body.

He sat down sweeping the dust from Ali's body and then said, 'Sit down, Abu-Turab!' Hence, this nickname was given to him by none except Allah's Messenger, and it was the dearest of all of his names to him.'7

Bodily Features Of Imam Ali

Imam Ali (‘a) was the best-looking and the most well-mannered of all people. The lineaments of light were shining on his face. The following are some bodily features of Imam Ali (‘a).

The Holy Prophet Describes Imam Ali

Imparting wonderful features to Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

He who wants to see the forbearance of Abraham, the wisdom of Noah, and the beauty of Joseph must look at Ali ibn Abi Talib.[8]

Dirar Describes Imam Ali

Dirar ibn Damarah reported: Following the martyrdom of Imam Ali (‘a), I headed for Syria to see Mu’awiyah. Knowing that I was a devotee of Imam Ali, Mu’awiyah asked, ‘Describe Ali for me.’

‘Please,’ I answered, ‘accept my excuse, for my tongue cannot possibly describe him.’

Mu’awiyah insisted, ‘Your excuse is not accepted. You have to describe him to me.’

I therefore said,

‘Now that you refuse to accept my excuse, listen carefully! Ali was sharp- sighted, prudent, powerful, and strong in the way of Allah. What he said was a criterion to distinguish between what was just and unjust. His judgments were fair. He was abounding in knowledge. Wisdom was evident in all dimensions of his character.

His intuition satiated those who had a thirst for it. He feared the ornaments of the world. He was devoted to the nocturnal supplications. Pondering over the tumultuous future made him cry

ceaselessly. Wearing coarse garment was pleasure for him. He loved plain food. He was not pretentious but was like one of us.

If we had any question, we would pose it to him and he would immediately answer it. If we asked for any help, he would immediately help us. Although he was very intimate, he was so awesome that we would never dare to say anything in vain. He was so dignified that we would never open our eyes on his face. He honored the people of religion and pleased the poor by fondling them.

No man of authority dared to misuse his power in his presence so as to get his approval for the unjust act he had done. No common person was made disappointed by his justice, thinking that since he had no power, he would be deprived of his justice. I take God as witness that in the middle of night and also when the stars were about to disappear, I saw him holding his beard in his hands, and like one bitten by a snake, he wept bitterly, saying,

'O world, go and deceive someone else, for I am not fond of you. Nevertheless, if you are offering yourself to me, you are quite mistaken, for I have divorced you three times, giving you no chance of recourse. O world, know that your life is short, your worth little and your pleasure transient.' Then, he heaved a sigh, saying, 'Oh for little provision, long journey, and a path full of horror.'' 9

Muhammad Ibn Al-Hanafiyyah Describes His Father

Describing the physical features of his father, Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiyyah is reported to have said,

He (i.e. Imam Ali) was of medium height. His eyebrows were thin and long. His eyes were big and beautiful. His face was as shiny as full moon. His skin was little bit brown. He was hairless except

on the backside of his head, which was covered with a line of hair like a wreath. His neck was as white as a silver vessel. His neck and abdomen were great.

His back was high. His chest was wide. His body was even. The places of his bones were big. It could not be possible to distinguish between his upper arm and forearm, because they were intermixed. His arms and shoulders were huge. The soft ends of his bones were as great as the bones of a predatory beast. He had a beard that decorated his chest. His muscles were viscous and his legs were fleshy.10

Al-Mughirah Describes Imam Ali

In short words, Al-Mughirah, one of Imam Ali's enemies, described him as saying,

He was like a lion; whatever part of his body that should be huge was huge and whatever part that should be soft was soft.11

Contemporaries Describe Imam Ali

Describing Imam Ali's some physical features, one of his contemporaries said,

He was medium sized. His eyes were big and very black. His face was as good-looking as full moon. He had great body. He was broad-shouldered. The soft ends of his bones were as great as the bones of a predatory beast. His upper arm cannot be distinguished from his forearm as if they were merged together. His hands were fleshy and the flesh on his bones was massive.

His neck was delicate and as white as a silver vessel. He was bald and there was no hair on his scalp except on the backside. His beard was heavily haired. He did not need dyeing. In his walking, he was leaning to the front side. His arm and hand were tough. When he walked to a battlefield, he would trot. He was rigid-

hearted. He would always be the winner in wrestling. He was courageous and venerable in the eyes of whoever faces him.12

The Early Life Of Imam ‘Ali

In his childhood, Imam Ali (‘a) grew up under the protection of his father, Abu Talib, who brought him up on all virtues and elements of honor and fed him on chivalry, nobility, and deep faith in Almighty Allah. Having played a remarkable role in Imam Ali’s rearing, his mother, who was the pioneer of chastity and decency, fed him on nobilities of character, well-mannerism, and gallant instincts.

In the first years of Imam Ali’s boyhood, his tribe was afflicted by a financial crisis because of which Abu Talib suffered much. He therefore went to the Holy Prophet (S) and his two uncles, Hamzah and Al-’Abbas, asking them for help. They offered to take upon themselves the custody of his four sons on behalf of him.

Answering them, Abu Talib said, ‘Leave ‘Aqil to me and take whomever you want.’ Al-’Abbas then took Talibb, Hamzah took Ja’far, and the Holy Prophet (S) decided on Ali, saying to his two uncles, ‘I have chosen the one whom God has chosen for me.’ Since that day, Imam Ali was under the custody of the Holy Prophet (S) who covered him with high affection and tenderness.

About this golden stage of his lifetime under the custody of the Holy Prophet, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

Certainly, you know my position of close kinship and special relationship with the Prophet of Allah peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants. When I was only a child, he took charge of me. He used to press me to his chest and lay me beside him in his bed, bring his body close to mine and make me smell his smell. He used to chew something and then feed me with it.

He found no lie in my speaking, nor weakness in any act. I used to follow him like a young camel following in the footprints of its mother. Every day he would show me in the form of a banner some of his high traits and commanded me to follow it.13

Among the elements of self-promotion and highness the Holy Prophet (S) implanted in the menTalibty of Imam Ali ('a) was self-denial. About this characteristic, it is related that Imam Ali ('a), once, knocked the door of the Holy Prophet's house and when the Prophet (S) asked who the knocker was, Imam Ali ('a) answered, 'It is I.'

Teaching the Imam a moral principle in a very polite manner, the Holy Prophet (S) said unpleasantly, 'It is I! It is I!' Immediately, Imam Ali ('a) understood the Holy Prophet's point and learned the lesson completely. Since that day, Imam Ali ('a) had never repeated the word 'I' when it would signify any sort of haughtiness or pride.14

This lesson continued to the last moment of the lifetime of Imam Ali ('a). Historians report that during his reign, Imam Ali ('a), leading his army, passed by Al-Mada'in, a province in Iraq, and the people of this province, showing honor and respect for him, prepared for a big banquet for his army and him, slaughtering many animals.

This situation did not please him; he therefore talked to the people to prove that he is just like any one of them, no more. He then ordered his army not to eat from that banquet before they would pay for it.15

O Ali!

The following instructions of the Holy Prophet (S) to Imam Ali ('a) reveal some aspects of this education:

O Ali, three characters are the highest moral standards: to regard him who ruptured his relations with you, to give him who deprived you (of his bestowals), and to pardon him who wronged you.

O Ali, three characters are the masters of deeds: to treat people fairly, to equalize your brothers-in-faith with yourself, and to praise God under any condition.

O Ali, three characters are within the expressions of true faith: to spend in times of misery, to treat the others justly with regard to personal issues, and to give knowledge to its seekers.

O Ali, I will convey to you a commandment that you should retain. You will keep up yourself in goodness as long as you follow my commandment:

O Ali, as for those who suppress their anger while they are able to punish, Almighty Allah will endow them with security and tasteful faith on the Resurrection Day.

O Ali, he who meets Almighty Allah while he enjoys these three favorable deeds is indeed the best of all people: the best worshipper of all people is he who fulfills the obligatory duties of God properly. The most pious of all people is he who abstains from the forbidden matters. The wealthiest of all people is he who satisfies himself with that which God has given to him.

O Ali, Allah the Blessed and Exalted has indeed removed by Islam the baseless zeal of the people of the pre-Islamic era and their taking pride in their ancestors. Verily, all people belong to Adam equally and Adam was created from dust. The noblest of all people is actually the most pious to God.

O Ali, three men will be stood under the shade of the (Divine) Throne on the Resurrection Day: a man who likes for his brother-in-faith whatever he likes for himself, a man who stops

doing any thing before he realizes whether it pleases or displeases God, and a man who does not find fault with his friends before he himself gets rid of that fault. A man will find a new fault with himself whenever he gets rid of one. It is quite sufficient for a man to be engaged with mending his own defects.

O Ali, I warn you against three things: envy, avarice, and arrogance.

O Ali, he is indeed one of the inhabitants of Hellfire that learns a branch of knowledge with the intention of disputing with the foolish, arguing with the scholars, or showing off.

O Ali, may I inform you of the evilest people?' They are those who never forgive and never overlook. May I inform of those who are worse than those people?' They are those whose evil is not secured and good is not expected from them.

O Ali, no poverty is harsher than ignorance, no fortune better than good reason, no loneliness drearier than pride, no work better than management, no asceticism like refraining from violating God's prohibitions, and no lineage like good manners. Telling lies is the epidemic of speaking, oblivion the epidemic of knowledgeability, and reminding others of one's favors to them the epidemic of generosity.

O Ali, beware of telling untruths, for it blackens the face then the teller of lies will be recorded with God as liar. Honesty whitens the face and the honest will be recorded with God as truthful. You should know that honesty is blessed and lie is ill-omened.

O Ali, beware of backbiting (i.e. speaking ill of someone behind his/her back) and talebearing (i.e. informing against people).

O Ali, do not be angry (under any circumstances). If you are enraged, you should sit down and think of the Lord's power over His servants; yet, He treats them leniently. If someone says to

you, 'Fear God,' you should try to relinquish your rage and cling to your (feeling of) clemency.

O Ali, I warn you against breaking your word and against helping others break their words. I also warn you against planning for evil, for evil plans shall beset none save their authors. I then warn you against rebellion, for Allah shall most certainly give victory to whomever is rebelled against (unjustly).

O Ali, to avoid pleasing anyone and discontenting God, thanking anyone for a favor that God has given to you, and reproaching anyone for something that God has not given to you-these are parts of true conviction. The sustenance cannot be obtained through(any sort of) niggardliness and will not be ceased when someone hates it. Out of His wisdom and grace, God has made relief and delight lie in conviction and satisfaction, and made care and grief lie in suspect and malice.[16]

The First Male To Accept Islam

Historians have unanimously agreed that Imam Ali ('a) was the first male to believe in and respond to the invitation of the Holy Prophet (S) to the new religion with full awareness and faith.[17]

In this respect, Imam Ali ('a) has declared,

Verily, I worshipped Allah the Exalted before any one of this nation did.[18]

On another occasion, he said,

For seven whole years, I used to hear the voice of the Divine Revelation and see the light, while the Messenger of Allah was silent because he had not been yet allowed to warn and promulgate for the religion.[19]

Likewise, it is unanimously agreed that the idols of the pre-Islamic era had never defiled him, for he had never prostrated for any idol, while all the others did.[20]

In his book of Imta' Al-Asma', Al-Maqrizi says,

As for Ali ibn Abi Talib the Hashemite, he had never set any god with Almighty Allah. This is because Allah the Exalted intended good for him when He made him grow up under the custody of his cousin the Master of the Messengers of Allah.21

Relating the belief of Lady Khadijah and him, Imam Ali ('a) says,

*On those days, Islam did not exist in any house except that of the Prophet of Allah peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants and Khadijah, while I was the third after these two. I used to see and watch the effulgence of divine revelation and message, and breathed the scent of Prophethood.*22

Although historicists agree that Imam Ali ('a) embraced Islam in the age of seven or nine years,23 a deep look into his childhood involves that he had embraced Islam before that, since he spent his childhood under the custody of the Holy Prophet (S).

On many occasions, Imam Ali ('a) used to take pride in this peculiarity. Declaring this fact, the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

The foremost of you all to join me at the Divine Pond is the foremost of you all to embrace Islam; namely, Ali ibn Abi Talib.24

Imam Ali's Love For The Holy Prophet

Imam Ali's love for the Holy Prophet (S) encompassed his entire soul; he therefore kept faith to him so sincerely. When he was asked to describe the scope of his love for the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali ('a) answered,

*By Allah I swear this; the Prophet is dearer to us than our fortunes, sons, and mothers. He is even dearer to us than cold water to the thirsty.*25

Unquestionably, none of the members of the Prophet's household and none of his companions could ever match Imam Ali ('a) in his love for the Holy Prophet (S). Historicists relate that one day, an owner of a date-palm orchard offered Imam Ali ('a) to give him one date for each bucket he would use in irrigating that ranch. Imam Ali ('a) accepted the offer and the owner of the orchard fulfilled his promise to him. As soon as he received the dates, Imam Ali ('a) hurried towards the Holy Prophet (S) and offered him these dates.26

Imam Ali ('a) used to work for the Holy Prophet (S) and undertake all his works. Whenever the Holy Prophet (S) wanted to stand up, Imam Ali ('a) used to help him do so, and whenever he wanted to sit down, he would lean on Imam Ali ('a).27

It is reported that one day, a man came to the Holy Prophet (S) asking, yet insistently, for forgiveness and for a donation. The Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam Ali ('a), 'Cut off this man's tongue against me!' Controlled by panic, the man went with Imam Ali ('a) and asked if he would really cut off his tongue.

'I am going to carry out what I have been ordered to do,' answered the Imam ('a). The man was led to the place where the camels dedicated to almsgiving were positioned and asked the man to choose whatever he would like. Only then, the man's panic disappeared and he could understand the Holy Prophet's point.

Commenting on the Holy Prophet's word, Imam Ali ('a) expressed, 'This is the most eloquent periphrasis 28 I have ever heard from an Arabic-speaking person.'29

Sincerely, Imam Ali ('a) used to undertake all the Holy Prophet's missions; he used to ride on the Holy Prophet's mule, named Al-Shahba', drive it in the quarters of the city, and carry out the Holy Prophet's instructions.30

Expressing his love for the Holy Prophet (S) and admitting of his unparalleled standing that none else could realize as he did, Imam Ali ('a) used to demonstrate some points of his standing in the form of supplicatory prayers. In one of these, he used to say,

All praise be to Allah the Lord of the Worlds. May Allah bless the purest of the Messengers, Muhammad the son of Abdullah, the well-chosen, the splitter, and the mender. O Allah, please give Muhammad-May Allah bless him and his Household-exclusively the praiseworthy mention and the Pond that will be joined.

O Allah, please furnish Muhammad, may Your blessings be upon him and his Household, with (right of) mediation, superiority, and virtue; and make love for him common to the ones chosen by You, make his rank the highest, and make him enjoy a special honor among the ones drawn near to You.

O Allah, please decide the best share of every item of honor to be his, decide the most expansive of every bliss to be his, decide the most abundant of every donation to be his, decide the most blooming of every easiness to be him, and decide the most profuse of every portion (of goodness) to be his, so that none of Your creatures will ever be nearer to You than him, higher in standing and rank with You than him, greater in claim with You than him, or more effective in mediation with You than him.

May Your blessings be upon him and his Household. He is surely the guide and leader to uprightness, the caller to all decencies, the blessing invoked upon all the servants (of You), and (Your) mercy to all of the worlds.

O Allah, please make us join Muhammad, may Your blessings be upon him and his Household, in felicity of living, taste of comfort, stability in bliss, enjoyment of personal desires, gaining of the appetites, winning of the pleasures, hoping for virtue, experiencing of tranquility, attainment of the climax of honoring, arriving at the delight of the eye, realizing of the brightness of happiness, and feeling the delights that are unlike those of the worldly life.

We bear witness that he did convey the Message, pass on the advice, exert all efforts for the good of his community, undergo harm for Your sake, struggle in Your way, and worship You until death came upon him. So, may Allah bless him and his Immaculate Household.

O Allah, Lord of the Sacred City; Lord of the Corner (of the Holy Ka'bah) and the Standing-place (of Abraham); Lord of the Sacred Monument; and Lord of the consecration (for Hajj) and the release (for the state of consecration for Hajj); please convey our salutations to the soul of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his Household.

O Allah, please pour blessings upon your Favorite Angels, Prophets, and Messengers-all of them. O Allah, please pour blessings upon the honorable, honest recording angels and upon all the beings who are obedient to You from the inhabitants of the Seven Skies and the inhabitants of the Seven Layers of the earth who believe in You. 31

The following supplicatory prayer composed by Imam Ali ('a) demonstrates some aspects of the honor and respect he used to show to the Holy Prophet (S):

O Allah, O Spreader of the surfaces (of earth) and Keeper (intact) of all skies, and Creator of hearts on good and evil nature; please send Your most pleasing blessings and growing favors on Muhammad, Your servant and Prophet, who is the last of those who preceded (him; i.e. the prophets), an opener for what is closed, proclaimer of truth with truth, repulser of the forces of wrong, and crusher of the onslaughts of misguidance.

As he was burdened (with responsibility of Prophethood), he bore it standing by Your commands, advancing towards Your will, without shrinking of steps, or weakness of determination, listening to Your revelations, preserving Your testament, proceeding forward in the spreading of Your commands until he lit fire for its seeker and lighted the path for the groper in the dark.

Hearts achieved guidance through him after having been ridden with troubles. He introduced clearly guiding signs and shining injunctions.

He is Your honest trustee, the treasurer of Your treasured knowledge, Your witness on the Judgment Day, Your envoy of truth, and Your Messenger to the people. O Allah, please prepare large place for him under Your shade and award him multiplying goodness by Your bounty.

O Allah, please give height to his construction above all other constructions, heighten his position with You, grant perfection to his effulgence, and perfect for him his light. In reward for his discharging Your sending him as Your Prophet, please grant him what will make his testimony admitted, his speech just, and his judgments clear-cut. O Allah, please put us and him together in the pleasures of life, continuance of bounty, satisfaction of desires, enjoyment of pleasures, ease of living, peace of mind, and gifts of honor. 32

On many occasions, Imam Ali ('a) invested the Holy Prophet (S) with the most expressive words of glorification and extolment. On one occasion, he ('a) said,

His (i.e. the Holy Prophet) place of stay is the best of all places and his origin the noblest of all origins in the mines of honor and the cradles of safety. Hearts of virtuous persons have been inclined towards him and the reins of eyes have been turned towards him. Through him, Allah buried mutual rancor and put off the flames of revolt.

*Through him, He gave them affection like brothers and separated those who were together (through unbelief). Through him, He gave honor to the low and degraded honor (of unbelief). His speaking is clear and his silence is (indicative) like tongue.*33

On another occasion, he described the Holy Prophet (S) as follows:

Allah deputed the Prophet with a sparkling light, a clear argument, an open path, and a guiding book. His tribe is the best tribe and his lineal tree the best lineal tree whose branches are in good proportion and fruits hanging (in plenty). His birthplace was Makkah and the place of his immigration taybah (Madinah), from where his name rose high and his voice spread far and wide.

*Allah sent him with a sufficing plea, a convincing discourse, and a rectifying announcement. Through him, Allah disclosed the ways that had been forsaken, and destroyed the innovations that had been introduced. Through him, He explained the detailed commands. Now, whoever adopts a religion other than Islam, his misery is definite, his stick (of support) will be cracked, his fate will be serious, his end will be long grief and distressing punishment.*34

Imam Ali; The Scribe Of The Divine Revelation

According to authentic reports, Imam Ali (‘a) used to write down the divine revelations that were received by the Holy Prophet (S) from Almighty Allah. He thus wrote a great number of the revelations and chapters of the Holy Quran.35 Imam Ali (‘a), who learned writing in his childhood,36 was the first to dot the copies of the Holy Quran.37

Not only did Imam Ali (‘a) write the divine revelations but he also used to document the truces, treaties, and agreements that the Holy Prophet (S) would conclude with other parties, such as those concluded with the people of Najran and with others.38 In the Pact of Al-Hudaybiyah that was concluded between the Holy Prophet (S) and the polytheists of Quraysh, Imam Ali (‘a) documented the articles of this pact.

In this document, he wrote down *‘Muhammad Rasulullah ‘Muhammad*; the Messenger of Allah’’, but the polytheists objected to this statement claiming that had they recognized the Holy Prophet (S) as a messenger from God, they would have never fought against him!

Therefore, the Holy Prophet (S) ordered Imam Ali (‘a) to erase this statement. However, the Imam (‘a) said, ‘It is too difficult for me to erase it!’ The Holy Prophet himself then erased it.39 It is worth mentioning that the Holy Prophet (S) used to check so carefully every letter Imam Ali (‘a) would write down.40

The Destroyer Of The Idols

Since his early life, Imam Ali (‘a) had feelings of strong antipathy against the idols and had had the desire to destroy them before the shining of Islam. Accompanied by Usamah, Imam Ali (‘a) used to gather sweepings and throw them at the idols at night. The next morning, the idol-worshippers would spend their whole day cleaning these idols.41

On other occasions, the Holy Prophet (S) himself would participate with Imam Ali (‘a) in destroying such idols. About this incident, Imam Ali (‘a) said, One day, the Holy Prophet (S) and I advanced towards the Ka’bah. When we were there, he asked me to sit down so that he would climb on my shoulders. I tried my best to stand up carrying him, but he felt that I had shown some inability.

He therefore sat down and I climbed on his shoulders. Once he raised me up, I felt as if I had the ability to touch even the sky. I then went up the Sacred House on the surface of which there was a copper statue. I began to move from its right, left, and fore sides until I could displace it. The Holy Prophet (S) asked me to drop it down.

Once I did, the statue broke up just like the breaking up of flasks. I then went down. Immediately, the Holy Prophet (S) and I ran quickly to hide so that none would see us.42

Imam Ali (‘a) destroyed a major idol called Manat that was held sacred by the Arabs of the pre-Islamic times.43 He also destroyed two more idols that were worshipped by the Tay Arab tribe and found two swords under them. He took these two swords to the Holy Prophet (S) who, in return, gave them to him as gift.44

When the Holy Prophet (S) led the conquest of Makkah, there were more than three hundred idols positioned on the roof of Holy Ka’bah. Imam Ali (‘a) climbed on the shoulders of the Holy

Prophet (S), uprooted all these idols, and threw them to the ground, including Hubal, a major idol that was worshipped by Abu-Sufyan.45

More Features

The inscription that Imam Ali ('a) chose for the stone of his ring was *allah almalik* (Allah is the King), which expresses his great attachment to the Lord.46 He never dyed his beard, because the Holy Prophet (S) foretold him that his beard would be dyed with the blood of his head.47

Imam Ali's House

When he was in Makkah, Imam Ali ('a) lived with his father in his house, a place well-known among the places of Makkah. When he emigrated to Al- Madinah, the Holy Prophet (S) built a house adjacent to the Prophet's Mosque for Imam Ali ('a) and made its door open to the Mosque. When he ordered to close completely all the doors that were open to the Mosque, the door of Imam Ali's house was excluded according to a divine command.

When he moved to Al-Kufah and made it the capital of his state, Imam Ali ('a) refused to reside in the famous palace known as *Qasr Al-Imarah*, which was built in the reign of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab as the headquarter of the governor. Hence, Imam Ali ('a) said, 'I will never reside in this palace of the insane ones.' He therefore lived for a short time in his nephew's house. He then left it after he had built for himself a mud house in Al-Kufah surrounded by reed chambers.

Mental Characteristics

Imam Ali ('a) held the most excellent elements of self-perfection and his virtues encompassed all fields of life. He is indeed the gift

of Almighty Allah to humankind, since he played the role of the guide of humanity after the Holy Prophet Muhammad-peace be upon him and his Household.

Let us now cite, yet briefly, the most eminent of these elements of perfection.

Strong Faith In Allah

The most incomparable quality of Imam Ali (‘a) is that he was the most faithful to Almighty Allah and the most knowledgeable of Him. He is thus reported to have said,
Even if the covering (that veils the facts of faith) is revealed before me, this will by no means increase my current conviction.

Expressing his deep faith in Almighty Allah, he (‘a) also said,

O my God, I worship You on account of neither fear of Your chastisement nor desire for Your reward; rather, I found You the worthiest of being worshipped; therefore, I do. 48

This is the very worship of those who turn to God only and recognize Him with thorough recognition.

Imam Ali (‘a) has dedicated his entire life to Almighty Allah, inviting to Him and striving for His sake with sincerity as is due to Him.

Historians relate that when Imam Ali (‘a) could knock ‘Amr ibn Abd-Wudd down after they had combated, he waited for a while before he gave the finishing stroke to him, because ‘Amr had cursed and sworn at the Imam (‘a) violently. This made the Imam (‘a) angry; he therefore waited until his rage faded away. Only then did he kill ‘Amr. When he was then asked about the reason, the Imam (‘a) answered,

I did not want to kill him in revenge for his cursing and swearing at me; lest I would have missed the reward of the Lord. Hence, when my rage

calmed down, I put him to death so that my deed would be purely for the sake of Almighty Allah.

Frequent Turning To Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) was the person who most frequently turned to God and feared Him. About this feature, Abu’l-Darda', a companion of the Holy Prophet (S), reported the following incident:

One day, I met Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) in a date-palm tree orchard where he hid himself from the views behind a tree. When I could no longer catch sight of him, I thought that he might have returned home. At once, I heard a sad voice and a grieved tone, saying,

O my God, too many have been the astounding offenses of me, which You have been too Forbearing to make me encounter Your punishment for them. Too many have been the wrongdoings that You have been too Noble to disclose, out of Your Nobility. O my God, if my days of disobedience to You have become long and if my sins that are recorded in the Scroll have become gross, then I am still hoping for nothing other than Your forgiveness and I desire for nothing other than Your pleasure.

As I hid myself in the nearby bushes to hear what he was saying, I saw Ali offering many units of prayer. Upon accomplishment, Ali (‘a) became engrossed in supplications, weeping and wailing. He thus said,

O my God, when I think of Your pardon, the consequences of my evildoings are alleviated; but when I, after that, think of Your unbearable chastisement, my ordeal becomes greater and greater. Ah! If I see in the Scroll of my deeds an evildoing, which I have forgotten, but You have recorded; then, You will order them to take me away! Then, what a helpless one I shall be when my clan shall not be able to save me and my tribe shall be of no avail! Ah! For the fire that cooks well all livers and kidneys! Ah! For the fire that plucks out the head! Ah! For the flames of hell!

Then, Ali (‘a) burst in weeping bitterly and his voice faded away. I hurried towards him and found him as still as a piece of wood. As I tried to move him, he did not show any sign of life. I thus repeated a statement of sorrow and ran towards his house to declare his death.

Lady Fatimah (‘a) asked me to describe the manner in which I had found him. When I did, she said, ‘O Abu’L-Darda'! This very frequently happens to Ali (‘a) because of fear of Allah.’ I returned there, took some water with me, and sprinkled some on his face. He gained consciousness and looked at me while I was weeping. He asked me as to why I was weeping, to which I narrated the whole incident. Then, Ali (‘a) said,

O Abu’L-Darda'! If you see me being called to interrogation on the Judgment Day, when the evildoers realize for sure that they shall be chastised, when harsh and short-tempered angles will surround me from all sides, when I shall be stood up before the Omnipotent King-Lord, when all my friends will desert me, and when all the inhabitants of this world will feel pity for me, then you will most certainly be more merciful to me (than this situation) while I will be stood up before the One from Whom nothing can ever be concealed.

Astounded by this unparalleled God-fearing, Abu’L-Darda' confessed that he had never seen such piety with any of the Holy Prophet’s companions.

Dirar ibn Damrah Al-Dibabi was a companion of Imam Ali (‘a). When, after the martyrdom of Imam Ali (‘a), he went to Damascus, Mu’awiyah called him and asked him to say something about Imam Ali (‘a). Dirar, knowing that Mu’awiyah hated Imam Ali (‘a) intensely, tried to avoid this topic, but Mu’awiyah forced him to speak. Thereupon, Dirar said:

I had often seen Imam Ali in the depth of nights, when people were either sleeping or engrossed in amusements; he would be standing in the niche of the Mosque, with tears in his eyes or he

would beseech Almighty Allah to help him maintain a pious, a virtuous, and a noble character and to forsake the world.

He would then address the world, saying: 'O vicious world! Be away from me! Why do you come in front of me like this? Do you want to allure me? Allah forbid that I should be allured and tempted by you and your pleasures. It is not possible. Go and try your allurements on somebody else. I do not desire to own you and do not want to have you. I have forsaken you thrice.

It is like divorcing a woman thrice after which act she cannot be taken back as a wife. The life of pleasures that you offer is of a very little duration. There is no real importance in what you offer and the desire of holding you is an insult and humiliation to sober minds. Sad is the plight of those who want to acquire you. They do not provide for the Hereafter. They have to pass through a long journey over a very difficult road towards a sad destination.'

When Dirar stopped, there were tears in the eyes of Mu'awiyah who said,

'May peace of Allah be upon Abu'L-Hasan Ali ibn Abi Talib! He was undoubtedly like that.[49]

Relating Imam Ali's intense fear of Almighty Allah, Nawf, a famous scholar of the early Islamic days and one of Imam Ali's companions, says:

One night, I was with Imam Ali ('a). He spent the whole night with prayers. After each prayer, he would go out, look at the stars, and recite parts of the Holy Quran. After a while, he passed by me and asked, 'Are you asleep or awake, Nawf?' 'I am awake,' I answered, 'I am watching you.'

The Imam ('a) turned his face towards me and said in a low tone:

O Nawf! Blessed are those who abstain from the pleasures of this world and have great desire for the Hereafter. These are they who accept bare

ground as the most comfortable bed, water as the most pleasant drink, the Quran as their gown, and supplicatory prayers as their motto. They forsake the world with thorough forsaking, just like Prophet Jesus the son of Mary. Indeed, Allah the Honorable and Exalted revealed to Jesus the son of Mary:

Tell the elders from the Children of Israel, 'Do not enter any of My houses without having a pure heart, humble eyes, and clean hands.' Also tell them, 'Know that I will not answer the prayers of anyone amongst you. Neither will I answer the prayers of anyone who is indebted to any of my creatures.' 50

Historians have reported marvelous depictions of Imam Ali's turning to Almighty Allah even in the most horrible situations. During the Battle of Siffin, he would perform the prayers while the arrows of the enemies were targeted at him from all sides. Nevertheless, he paid no attention at all, because his feelings and attention were completely directed towards the Almighty.51

It is also reported that whenever Imam Ali ibn Al-Husayn Al-Sajjad ('a) browsed the book of Imam Ali ('a) and read the paragraphs about his worship in general and his prayers in particular during which his color would change in fear of Almighty Allah, he would say, 'Who can do this?'52

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir ('a) reported that he, one day, came to his father (Imam Al-Sajjad) who had carried out in worship what no one had ever carried out. He saw that his father's color had gone yellow from weeping all night, his eyes used up all their water from being awake all night, his forehead bruised, his nose squashed from prostrating, and his legs and feet swallowed from standing in prayer.

Imam Al-Baqir ('a) reported: I could not prevent myself from weeping when I saw him in that state as sign of showing mercy to him. He then turned to me and said, 'My son, give me some of those parchments in which there is the (practice of) worship of Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a).' As I did, he read something from them for a

while. Then he let them go from his hand in exasperation and said, 'Who is strong enough to perform the worship of Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a)?'[53]

Infallibility

Historians have unanimously agreed on the fact that Imam Ali ('a) had never erred, blundered, or committed any sin or wrongdoing throughout his lifetime and had never strayed off the Holy Prophet's traditions and instructions.

After the assassination of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, Abd Al-Rahman ibn 'Awf accepted to charge Imam Ali ('a) with the position of the leadership of the Muslim nation under the condition that Imam Ali ('a) would rule according to the course of Abu-Bakr and 'Umar. Yet, Imam Ali ('a) refused and insisted on ruling according to the Book of God and the Holy Prophet's traditions. Thus, he would never be seduced by any position that would lead him to commit any wrong.

Demonstrating his infallibility, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said a number of words indicating so. Some of these words are as follows:

By Allah, even if I am given all the domains of the seven (stars) with all that exists under the skies in order that I may disobey Allah to the extent of snatching one grain of barley from an ant, I would not do it.[54]

In the field of purity from filth and faculty of decency, he has said,

By Allah, I would rather pass a night in wakefulness on the thorns of Al-Sa 'dan (a plant having sharp prickles) or be driven in chains as a prisoner than meet Allah and His Messenger on the Judgment Day as an oppressor over any person or a usurper of anything out of worldly wealth.[55]

In the field of self-denial, he has said,

My attention is concentrated on one thing, that is, with the help of the fear of Allah and piety, I keep my desires under control so that in this world I may not commit sins and errors and on the Judgment Day when fear will be the lot of everybody I may feel safe and satisfied If I had so wanted, I could have very easily found ways and means to provide for myself the purest honey, the best variety of wheat and the finest silk clothes that could be woven.

But it is not possible for inordinate cravings to overcome me and it is not possible that greediness persuades me to acquire the best provisions when in Al-Hijaz and Yemen there may be people who have no hope of obtaining a piece of bread and who have never satisfied their hunger fully. It is not possible for me to satiate myself when there are around me people whom hunger and thirst keeps restless and agonized.

Do you want me to be like that person about whom somebody has very aptly said, "Is this disease not enough for you that you keep on sleeping with your stomach full, and around you there are such starving mouths that will greedily eat even dried goat-skin?' Shall I be satisfied simply because people call me Amir Al-Mu'minin (Leader of the faithful Muslims)?

Shall I not sympathize with the faithful Muslims in their calamities? Shall I not be their partner in their adversities? Shall I not be their fellow-sufferer? Shall I not set an example for them to patiently, courageously, and virtuously bear privation" 56

In the field of the reasons for which he would never commit a single sin, Imam Ali ('a) has said,

*By Allah, this world of you is certainly more worthless to me than a sweat of a peg in the hand of a leper.*57

In the field of his adherence to the right path from which he would never slip, Imam Ali ('a) has declared,

*I am certainly on clear guidance from my Lord (Allah) and on the path of my Prophet and I am on the right path, which I adhere to regularly.*58

I have never spoken a lie and the things revealed to me were not a lie. I have never deviated nor have I been made to deviate.

Those companions of Muhammad-peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants-who were the custodians (of divine messages) know that I never disobeyed Allah or His Messenger at all, and by virtue of the courage with which Allah honored me I supported him with my life on occasions when even the brave turned away and feet remained behind (instead of proceeding forward)' I swear by Him who is such that there is no god but He, that I am on the path of truth and that they (the enemy) are on the misleading path of wrong. 59

Asceticism

One of the most prominent characteristics of Imam Ali's personality is his practice of abstinence from luxury and worldly pleasures. He had full control over himself; he was therefore inured to living in a state of simplicity and abstention from all pleasures of life. He was thus described 60 as the most ascetic of all people.

When the position of caliphate was given to him, he divorced the worldly pleasures irrevocably and lived in the poor quarters of Al-Madinah and Al- Kufah the very way the poor and miserable lived. He chose neither a palace to live in nor the best of clothes to put on. He used to eat the very food the poor used to eat. When he was asked about that, he answered,

*Certainly, Allah the Sublime has made it obligatory on true leaders that they should maintain themselves at the level of low people so that the poor do not cry over their poverty.*61

Imam Ali ('a) did not pay any attention to the kind of clothes he would put on; therefore, he used to dress in the toughest clothes.

'Umar ibn Qays reported that some people blamed Imam Ali ('a) for he had dressed a patched wrapper. He yet answered,

This wrapper will be an example (of modesty) to the faithful believers and a reason for feelings of fear of God and self-humility. 62

Abu-Ishaq Al-Subay'i has reported that he was carried on his father's shoulder while Imam Ali ('a) was delivering a speech and fanning himself with his sleeve. 'Father,' Abu-Ishaq asked, 'he is doing so because he feels hot, is he not?' His father answered, 'No, son. He feels neither hot nor cold; rather, his shirt is wet because he has just washed it and he does not have any other one to put on instead.'63

Abu-Hayyan Al-Tamimi has reported his father to have said that he saw Imam Ali ('a) declaring from the minbar,

Is there anyone to purchase this sword of mine? Had I had the price of a wrapper, I would have never offered it to selling. 64

Ali ibn Al-Aqmar has reported that he saw Imam Ali ('a) in the marketplace offering one of his swords and saying,

Who will purchase this sword from me? I swear by Him Who split the grain that I, on many occasions, removed agony from the Messenger of Allah (S) by this sword. Had I had the price of a wrapper, I would have never offered it to selling. 65

One day, Imam Ali ('a) went to the marketplace to purchase a garment. When a cloth merchant recognized him, he tried to make a big discount as a sign of flattering to the ruler. The Imam ('a), upon recognizing the aim of the merchant, left him without buying anything. He then went to another store whose owner could not recognize him. He bought two pieces of clothing; one with three dirhams and the other with two.

The Imam ('a) gave the three- dirham piece to his servant Qambar, and kept the other for himself. Qambar said, 'You deserve this one more than I do, because you usually climb the minbar and deliver speeches.' In reply, the Imam ('a) said,

*You are young and you enjoy the enthusiasm of youth, while I am too shy of my Lord to prefer myself to you.*66

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) purchased a shirt with three dirhams and said,

*All praise be to Allah. This is some of His covering.*67

Harun ibn ‘Antarah has reported that he, once, visited Imam Ali (‘a) who was putting a worn garment and trembling of cold. The reporter said, ‘O Leader of the Believers, Almighty Allah has decided a portion of this public treasure for yourself and your family. Why are you in such a state?’

In reply, the Imam (‘a) said,

By Allah, I will never prejudice any amount of your money. This is in fact the very garment of mine which I left my homeland Al-Madinah wearing it. 68

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) purchased a piece of clothing. When he felt that he had liked this piece, he decided to give it as alms at once.69

Imam Ali (‘a) said in a speech he addressed to the people of Al-Kufah,

*I have entered this city of yours with these very clothes and with this riding-animal. If I leave it with anything more, then I am of the traitors.*70

Historicists have reported that Imam Ali (‘a), during his caliphate, did not possess even three dirhams to buy a wrapper or the like. He used to enter the building of the public treasure and distribute whatever therein on the people. He would then offer a prayer therein and say,

All praise be to Allah Who has taken me out of this building as same as I had entered. 71

When he departed life, Imam Ali (‘a) did not possess anything except his patched wrapper.

As for his food, Imam Ali (‘a) accustomed himself to abstaining from having various kinds of food; rather, he ate only what would keep his body and soul together, like salt and bread. Sometime, he would have milk or vinegar. During the days of the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali (‘a) very often tied a rock on his stomach because of hunger.72

He rarely ate meat; rather, he used to say,

*Do not make your stomachs graveyards of animals.*73

One day, a sort of sweets was presented to Imam Ali (‘a) who commented,

*This food is of good smell, nice color, and sweet taste, but I do not like to familiarize myself with something I am not accustomed to.*74

Imam Al-Baqir (‘a) has reported that Imam Ali (‘a) used to eat from the worst kind of dates. He would then drink water, beat his stomach with his hand, and say,

*Away with him whose stomach leads him to Hellfire.*75

About his asceticism and abandonment of worldly pleasures, Imam Ali (‘a) has said,

*By Allah, I have not treasured any gold out of your world nor amassed plentiful wealth nor collected any clothes other than the two shabby sheets.*76

On the last day of his noble lifetime, Imam Ali (‘a) broke his fast with a piece of bread and salt. He ordered his daughter Lady Ummu-Kulthum to take back the milk she had served him along with the bread and salt.77

At the same time, he used to invite the orphans and serve them with honey. Seeing this, one of his companions commented, 'I wish I were orphan!'78

Abdullah ibn Razin has reported that he, along with others, visited Imam Ali ('a) on the ''Id Al-Adha Day (the Greater Bairam) and he served them with a harirah (a dish of flour cooked with milk). Abdullah said, 'May Allah lead you to more success! Should you have served us with the meat of these swans''

The Imam ('a) answered,

*O son of Razin, I have heard the Messenger of Allah saying, 'It is illicit for an Imam (i.e. leader of the Muslim community) to take anything of the fortune of Allah except two bowls: one for his family and him and the other for the people.'*79

The following incident is about Imam Ali's protest against 'Asim ibn Ziyad who had confined himself with a cloak away from the people. His brother, Al- Rabi' ibn Ziyad, complained before Imam Ali ('a) that 'Asim's family had become depressed and his sons had been saddened because of his behavior. Imam Ali ('a) had summoned 'Asim ibn Ziyad and he was brought before him. When Imam Ali ('a) saw him, he frowned at him and asked,

Why did you not feel ashamed before your wife? Why did you not show kindness to your sons? Do you think Almighty Allah had made good things lawful to you and then He disliked if you used them? You are less significant to Him than such a thing. Is it not Allah Who has said, ***'He spread out the earth for the people (55:10)? There exist all kinds of fruits, palm-trees with sheathed blossoms, (55:11) grain with its husk and aromatic herbs.' (55:12)***

Is it not Allah Who has said, ***'He has made the two oceans meet each other, (55:19) but has created a barrier between them so that they will not merge totally. (55:20) (Jinn and mankind), which of the favors of your Lord do you, then deny? (55:21) From the two oceans come pearls and coral.' (55:22)***

I swear by Allah, the use of the bounties of Him in deed is more preferred by Him than in mere words (thanking Allah for His bounties merely in words without the use of practical benefits). Allah, the Most Majestic, the Most Gracious, has said, ***'... and proclaim the bounties of your Lord.' (93:11)***

'Asim asked, 'O Amir Al-Mu'minin, why have you confined yourself to tasteless food and harsh garments?' He said,

How inconsiderate of you! Allah, the Most Majestic, the Most Gracious, has made obligatory for the Imams (Leaders with Divine Authority) of justice to measure themselves with the people of lowest standard of living so that the poverty of the poor does not plunge them into despair.

'Asim then abandoned the gown and began to live a normal life.[80]

Salih ibn Al-Aswad has reported that he, once, saw Imam Ali ('a) riding on a donkey, putting his two legs on one side, and repeating this sentence:

Indeed, I have disgraced this world.[81]

Unmatched Heroism

Another feature of Imam Ali's distinctive personality was his great courage, valor, and bravery, which covered the entire globe and became proverbial. He is indeed the one and only hero of Islam, and Muslims have never known any sword like his. This sword harvested the heads of polytheism, humiliated the tyrants of Quraysh, smashed their arrogance, and shattered their vigor.

His honorable situations in the battles of Badr, Uhud, Al-Ahzab, and the other combats of Islam clearly indicate that Islam could endure due to the efforts of this hero.

Before the Holy Prophet (S), someone said that 'Amr ibn Ma'dyakrib is the greatest horseman of the Arabs. Correcting his

information, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

It is Ali who is the greatest horseman of the Arabs.82

Describing Imam Ali's bravery, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid says,

In the field of courage, Imam Ali made people forget any name of courageous people who existed before him and erased the name of any courageous one who would come after him. His situations in battles are too famous to be forgotten, since they have become proverbial and will remain so up to the Resurrection Day. He is indeed the brave one who has never absconded or feared a detachment.

He could kill any one who combated with him and none of his strikes needed another (to finish off his rivals). According to a tradition, Imam Ali's strikes were single. During the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali ('a) called Mu'awiyah to face him in a face-to-face combat so that the others would get rid of war when one of these two would kill the other. 'Amr ibn Al-'As, Mu'awiyah's consultant, said, 'This is indeed fair request!'

Answering him, Mu'awiyah said, 'You have never cheated me before this moment! Do you really want me to duel with Abu'L-Hasan while you know for sure that he is the unbeatable hero? It seems that you have aspired to lay hold of the rulership of Sham (Syria) after me!'

The Arab heroes used to take pride in facing Imam Ali in battles. Likewise, the folks of his victims took more pride. The sister of 'Amr ibn Abd-Wudd, one of Imam Ali's victims, took pride in the fact that her brother's killer was Ali, the matchless hero and the son of the matchless chief.83

Admitting Imam Ali's remarkable courage, Al-Shi'bi says that Ali ibn Abi-Talibb is the most courageous of all people. All Arabs admit this fact.84

During the days of the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali ('a) used to go out at night alone. Some of his companions said to him, 'How come you kill the people of Sham in days and go out alone in front of them at night wearing nothing more than a shirt and a wrapper?'

Answering them, the Imam said,

Do you frighten me of death? By Allah, I do not care whether I fall on death or death falls on me.[85]

Enormous Strength

The Almighty has endued Imam Ali ('a) with enormous strength and bodily vigor in addition to his great physical power. Due to these physical and mental powers, Imam Ali ('a) could defeat the polytheists of Quraysh and the Jews whose attempts to extinguish the light of Islam had not stopped until he brought them to an end. As a sign of his physical power, whenever Imam Ali ('a) grasped a man from the arm, this would be as if he grasped his soul, because the Imam's grasp would block even his breath.[86]

In his early days, he used to wrestle with his elder brothers and cousins and he was always the winner. When he grew up, he used to bring to the ground the strongest men, and take the giant ones up and knock them down.

Sometimes, he grasped others from the belly and raised them in the air. Moreover, he used to follow a running horse, hit it, and stop it from running.[87] This is not strange, because it is he who pulled out the great gate of Khaybar and used it as a bridge on which his troops crossed to the other side of the ditch. He then threw the gate for an amazing distance. This incident became the topic of the people's discourse up to the present day. Unfortunately, this great power was misunderstood by some extremists who claimed Imam Ali's godhead.

Forbearance

Patterning after his cousin and educator; i.e. the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali (‘a) was the most forbearing and the most self-possessed. He had never revenged himself against his enemies or those who maltreated him; rather, he used to reward them with lenience and pardon.

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) called upon a servant of him, but the servant refused to answer. The Imam (‘a) then called him twice and thrice, but no answer was shown. The Imam (‘a) then came to the servant and asked, ‘What for have you refused to answer me?’ The servant answered, ‘Well, I am too lazy to answer you. Besides, I was sure that you would not punish me; therefore, I refused to answer.’ Upon this reply, the Imam (‘a) felt glad and said,

All praise be to Allah Who has made me one of those whose vengeance is secured by His creatures.

The Imam (‘a) then manumitted the servant for the sake of Almighty Allah.88

Abu-Hurayrah, who is well-known for his deviation from the Imam’s line and open enmity towards him, visited the Imam (‘a) once and asked for something. Immediately, the Imam (‘a) responded to him. Upon this situation, some of the Imam’s companions blamed him. He yet answered,

*I am too noble to make his (i.e. Abu-Hurayrah’s) foolishness overcome my forbearance, his sinfulness overcome my pardon, and his begging overcome my magnanimity.*89

Ibn Al-Kawwa', one of the Khawarij (or Kharijites; a deviant sect who mutinied against Imam Ali’s authority due to a political background), used to revile at Imam Ali (‘a) openly in his presence. Nevertheless, the Imam (‘a) neither treated him like for like nor took any procedure against him although he was the ruler of the state.

One day, this infidel recited the following Quranic verse in the face of Imam Ali (‘a): ***‘Certainly, it has been revealed to you and to those before you: Surely, if you associate (with Allah), your work would certainly come to naught. (39:65)’***

In return, Imam Ali (‘a) answered with the following holy verse:

‘Be patient; surely, the promise of Allah is true and let not those who have no certainty hold you in light estimation. (30:60)’

A remarkable sign of Imam Ali’s forbearance is that when he got ‘A'ishah after she had lost the Battle of the Camel (Al-Jamal), while it was she who rallied people and waged this war against him, he pardoned her, allowed her to depart in a handsome manner, and furnished her with all the provision she would need in her journey.

Similarly, Imam Ali (‘a) got his bitterest enemy, Marwan ibn Al-Hakam, but he pardoned and released him.

Abdullah ibn Al-Zubayr, who used to revile at Imam Ali (‘a) openly and attribute wicked descriptions to him, was also gotten by Imam Ali (‘a) during the battle. Nevertheless, Imam Ali (‘a) pardoned him and said no more than the following few words: *‘Go away! Do not let me see you ever again.’*

After the Battle of the Camel, Imam Ali (‘a) got Sa’id ibn Al-’As, one of his bitterest enemies, in Makkah, but he neither blamed nor said any word to him.[90]

Another situation that reveals Imam Ali’s forbearance is that when Mu’awiyah’s troops seized the sources of water during the Battle of Siffin, they prevented the Imam’s troops from having from that water. When the Imam (‘a) asked for water, Mu’awiyah’s troops refrained and declared that they would make him die thirsty. Therefore, the Imam (‘a) ordered his troops to occupy the banks of the River Euphrates.

They did and possessed the water sources. Hence, Mu'awiyah's troops wandered in the desert without having a drop of water with them. The Imam's companions asked him to return like for like and prevent Mu'awiyah's troops from water, but he refused and said, 'No, by Allah. I never return like for like.' He then ordered his troops to give them a space to reach water because 'the edges of swords will suffice,' as he said.[91]

On one of the days of the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali ('a) chased 'Amr ibn Al- 'As, the deviser of Mu'awiyah's government, who, having seen that he would be under the mercy of Imam Ali's sword, he revealed his anus in the face of the Imam ('a). Immediately, the Imam ('a) blushed and went back!

Patience

Imam Ali ('a) faced all the ordeals and misfortunes that inflicted him with full patience and serenity. The most horrible of these ordeals was the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S). Immediately after that, the Imam ('a) was exposed to the most catastrophic conspiracy in the history of Islam, when the heads of Quraysh held a secret meeting and insisted on violating the Holy Prophet's will of appointing Imam Ali ('a) as the next leader of the Muslim nation.

When Imam Ali ('a) refused to swear allegiance to the fake leader, the conspirers attacked him in his house, surrounded the house with fire, and took him out tied with the chain of his sword to swear allegiance to Abu-Bakr.

Another ordeal that Imam Ali ('a) had to suffer was the passing away of his wife, Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a), a few days after the departure of her father, the Holy Prophet (S). He felt burning anxiety for her and confined himself to his house away from the community.

Nevertheless, the usurpers of his position of leadership could not do without him; they therefore had to refer to him in every politi-

cal, religious, and social dilemma, because they were too ignorant to run the affairs of the Muslim nation. In this regard, 'Umar ibn Al- Khattab declared on more than one occasion, 'Had it not been for Ali, 'Umar would have perished.'

When the next leadership was given to 'Uthman, he ruled tyrannically, committed the most horrific crimes, and transferred the fortunes of the Muslim nation to his relatives, the bitterest enemies of Islam. Having been fed up by the terrible ruling of 'Uthman, Muslims had no other option than putting him to death and insisting on Imam Ali ('a) to hold the position of leadership.

The Imam ('a) refused, because he understood the great damage 'Uthman's government had done to the political and social structure of the Muslim community, but people insisted and even threatened him if he would refuse. He therefore held the position in spite of the many crises and troubles he would face in amending what 'Uthman had ruined.

The masses hence swore allegiance to him and, in turn, he spread justice among them and everybody was delighted in his government except the families of Quraysh who had known for sure that Imam Ali ('a) would divest them of their properties they had usurped from the public treasury.

They therefore spared no single effort in overthrowing the Imam ('a). Thus did they wage two wars against him; namely, the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin. After that, more ordeals attacked the Imam ('a) until he was martyred in a mosque.

Modesty

Imam Ali ('a) behaved modestly towards the poor and the simple people, but not the rich and the arrogant.

One day, he ('a) hosted a man and his son. When they had a meal together, the Imam ('a) took the pitcher and poured water on the

man's hands to wash them. Panicked, the man said, 'How will the Almighty see me while you are pouring water on my hands?'

Gently, the Imam ('a) answered,

Indeed, the Almighty sees me as your brother without any distinction or preference over you. This raises my rank in Paradise.

When the Imam ('a) finished, he handed the pitcher over to his son Muhammad and ordered him to pour water on the hands of the man's son, saying,

O son, if this son had come to me alone, I would have poured water on his hands, but Almighty Allah does not accept to equalize a son to his father.92

When Imam Ali ('a), marching at the head of his army towards Syria, reached Al-Anbar, the landlords of the place came out to meet him in zeal of their love, faithfulness, and respect. No sooner had they seen Imam Ali ('a), they rode off their horses and started running in front of him. Imam Ali ('a) asked the reason of their strange actions. They replied that it was their custom to show their love and respect to their chiefs. He thus replied,

*By Allah (I swear this), by your action you do no good whatsoever to your rulers but you tire yourself and put yourself in toils in this world and in trouble in the next. How unfortunate is that exertion, which brings harm here and in the Hereafter, and how useful is that ease which keeps you in comfort in this world and away from the Hell in the next.*93

One day, when Imam Ali ('a) went out along with his companions, he was riding his horse, but noticed that his companions were walking. He asked them if they had a request to be granted by him. They replied in the negative and said that they just wanted to be with him. He then asked them to return, since accompanying one who is riding on foot will corrupt the hearts of the foolish.94

Visiting The Sick

Imam Ali (‘a) used to visit the sick and encourage his companions to do so. Once, he said to them, whoever visits his ailed brother-in-faith is as if he is walking under the fruitful trees of Paradise. If he sits with him, mercy will cover him totally.95

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) visited one of his sick companions and said to him,

*May Allah make this illness a thing to atone your sins, because a disease in itself has nothing to bring reward to anyone, but it erases one's sins and makes them fall like (dried) leaves; so far as reward is concerned, one has to earn it with his good words and good deeds. The Almighty Lord grants Paradise to whomever he wishes from among his creatures, on account of their piety and noble thoughts.*96

On another occasion, Imam Ali (‘a) visited his friend Sa’sa’ah ibn Sawhan in his illness and said to him,

By Allah, you have always been of very light expenses and of valuable assistance.

Answering him, Sa’sa’ah said, ‘So are you, Leader of the Believers. Allah the Almighty is great in your sight, you are merciful to the believers, and you are well-versed in the Book of Allah.’

When the Imam (‘a) was about to leave, he said to Sa’sa’ah,

Do not take pride in my visit to you over your people, for Allah the Almighty does not love him who is proud and boastful. 97

Detestation Of Praise

Imam Ali (‘a) always detested any word of praise or commendation that was said to him. Whenever he was praised, he would say,

*I am less than what you have said about me and greater than what you think of me.*98

Whenever he was commended, he (‘a) would say in a form of supplicatory prayer, *O Allah, I know myself more than he (i.e. the commending person) does; therefore, (please) forgive me that which he does not know about me.*99

Response To Invitations

Imam Ali (‘a) would respond to the invitation to a meal that was offered by any person, especially the poor. One day, he said to a man who invited him,

I will come to you on condition that you will not serve us with things that are beyond your ability and do not deprive us of things that you are able to offer!100

Generosity

Imam Ali (‘a) was the most generous of all people and the most charitable to the needy. He did not pay any attention to funds unless they would feed a hungry or clothe a naked. He also used to prefer the needy to himself even if he himself was in need. He and his household gave their food to a poor, an orphan, and a prisoner for three consecutive days and spent these three days having nothing but water.

Appreciating this situation, Almighty Allah revealed a whole Surah (chapter of the Holy Quran); namely, Surah Al-Insan (No. 76).

Likewise, it is Imam Ali (‘a) who gave his ring as alms to a beggar while he was offering a prayer. In this respect, the Almighty revealed a holy Quranic verse (namely; 5/55).

Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah has reported that someone came to Imam Ali (‘a) and said, ‘O Leader of the Believers, I need something which I had provided before Almighty Allah and then came asking it from you. If you grant me my need, I will praise the Almighty and thank you. If you do not, I will praise the Almighty and excuse you.’

Answering him, the Imam (‘a) said,

You may write down your need on the ground, because I do not like to see the humility of begging on your face.

As the man did, Imam Ali (‘a) gave him a garment and the man immediately wore it. Then, the Imam (‘a) ordered one hundred dinars (i.e. golden coins) to be given to him. Upon this situation, Al-Asbagh was astonished, saying, ‘Do you give him such an amount, too?’

The Imam (‘a) answered,

I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, ‘Treat people according to their standings.’ This is the standing of this man in my sight.[101]

When Imam Ali (‘a) distributed the spoils of the war of Al-Basrah (i.e. the Battle of the Camel) among the individuals of his army, each one gained five hundred dirhams (i.e. silver coins), the same amount that the Imam (‘a) took for himself. Immediately after that, a man who had not participated in that battle came to him and said, ‘Although I did not participate in that campaign, I was there in my heart; therefore, please give me something.’

The Imam (‘a) then gave him his share and returned empty-handed.[102]

Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) has reported that Imam Ali (‘a), carrying a sack full of bread, stood under the shed of Banu-Sa’idah because it was raining. Once he noticed that there were poor people sleeping

there, he began putting one or more loaves of bread under the bed of each of them.[103]

One day, Imam Ali ('a) went out, carrying a skin on his shoulder and a bowl in his hand, and supplicating his Lord, saying:

O Allah! O Guardian of the believers, God of the believers, and Protector of the believers; please, accept my offering this night, for I do not possess anything this evening except what is in my bowl and what covers my body. You do know that I have deprived myself of this although I feel terribly hungry, seeking nearness to You, which is the true gain. O Allah, please do not deform my face and do not reject my supplication.

Then, he went on feeding the poor.[104]

On another occasion, the Imam ('a) possessed only four dirhams. He gave one as alms at night, the other in day, the third secretly, and the fourth openly. Appreciating this situation, this holy verse was revealed:

'As for those who spend their property by night and by day, secretly and openly, they shall have their reward from their Lord and they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. (2:274)' [105]

In the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (S), there was a poor man who lived in a small house neighboring an orchard of a rich man. The date-palm trees of that orchard hanged down in the poor man's house and his children hurried to pick up the falling dates, but their father would prevent them. The poor man complained about this situation to the Holy Prophet (S) who went to the owner of the orchard and asked him to sell it in return for a garden in the upper Paradise.

The man however refused. The Holy Prophet (S) returned disappointed. In his way back, he met Imam Ali ('a) and told him about the matter. Immediately, Imam Ali ('a) went to the owner of the orchard and offered to purchase it from him. The man accepted on condition that he would take Imam Ali's best garden in return.

The Imam (‘a) accepted and hurried to the poor man to give him that orchard for free.106

Describing Imam Ali’s generosity, Al-Shi’bi says,

Ali was the most generous of all people. He was characterized by the very disposition that Almighty Allah loves; namely, generosity and liberality. He has never answered a beggar in the negative.107

Kindness To The Poor

Imam Ali (‘a) showed perfect kindness to the poor; he behaved as if he were their father. He showed them clemency and equalized himself to them in the vicissitudes of time, starvation, and harshness. In his reign, he declared,

*Is it possible for me to satiate myself when there are around me people whom hunger and thirst keeps restless and agonized? Do you want me to be like that person about whom somebody has very aptly said, ‘Is this disease not enough for you that you keep on sleeping with your stomach full, and around you there are such starving mouths that will greedily eat even dried goat-skin?’*108

During his time in power, the first priority that Imam Ali (‘a) took was eradication of misery and deprivation, distribution of the fortunes among the subjects equally and fairly, and paying very much attention to the manners and circumstances of the poor and needy. This is the reason that incited the animosity of the rich capiTalibsts of Quraysh towards him and made them stand against him, try their best to frustrate his plans, and wage wars against him so as to prevent him from achieving social justice on the globe.

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) was out when he saw a lady fatigued by the water skin she was carrying on her shoulders. Immediately, he hurried towards her and took the skin from her to the door of her

house. When he (‘a) asked her about her manners, she, who could not recognize him, complained, ‘’Ali sent my husband to one of the borders where he was martyred, leaving his children orphans and me without having anything to nourish them. I therefore had to serve people.’

Shocked by her saying, Imam Ali (‘a) left her burdened with heavy sadness. He spent that night restless. The next morning, he carried a basket full of food and directed towards the woman’s house to feed her orphans. On his way, one of his companions saw him and offered to help him carry that basket. The Imam (‘a) answered, *‘If you do it now, who will burden off my sin on the Resurrection Day?’*

When he reached the woman’s house, he knocked the door. ‘Who is it?’ she asked. ‘I am the slave who helped you carry the water skin yesterday,’ he answered. ‘Please open the door, for I have something for the children.’ The woman prayed for him and said, ‘May Allah be pleased with you, and May He judge between Ali ibn Abi Talib and me.’

The Imam (‘a) then said to her, ‘I just seek divine reward. You may now choose either to knead and make bread, or to entertain the children while I will make bread.’ The woman answered, ‘I am more experienced in kneading and making bread than you are; therefore, you may entertain the children while I bake.’

While the woman was baking, Imam Ali (‘a) cooked meat and began serving the children with it and with dates. Whenever he passed a bite to one of them, he said, *‘O son, please release Ali ibn Abi Talib from the ordeals you have seen.’* When the dough fermented, the woman said to the Imam (‘a), ‘O servant of Allah, go and fire up the oven.’

The Imam (‘a) hurried and fired up the oven. Whenever fire burned his face, he said, *‘O Ali, this is the penalty of him who has neglected the widows and the orphans!’* In the meantime, a neighboring

woman entered that house and could recognize Imam Ali (‘a). She thus shouted at the orphans’ mother, ‘Woe to you!

This is Ali ibn Abi Talib!’ Astounded by this news, the woman was about to fall down. She said to the Imam (‘a), ‘How abashed I am from you, Leader of the Believers!’ Answering her, the Imam (‘a) said, ‘*How abashed I am from you, she-servant of Allah, for I have neglected you.*’[109]

Justice

Indeed, Imam Ali (‘a) was the voice of human justice. He preferred the establishment of justice over all things, canceled all kinds of favoritism, and worked towards the pleasure of the Almighty and the public interest.

Historians have reported that ‘Aqil, once, visited him in Al-Kufah, the capital of his state and the Imam (‘a) welcomed him hospitably and ordered his son Al- Hasan to give him a shirt and a garment as present. When it was time for dinner, the Imam (‘a) served his brother with bread and salt. Resentfully, ‘Aqil said, ‘Is that all?’

Gently, the Imam (‘a) answered, *‘Is this not part of the grace of Allah?* Very much praise be to Him for this.’ ‘Aqil then asked the Imam (‘a) to give him an amount of money enough to settle his debt so that he would leave as soon as possible. *‘How much is your debt?’* asked the Imam (‘a). ‘It is one hundred thousand dirhams,’ answered ‘Aqil. The Imam (‘a) said, *‘In fact, I do not have such an amount right now and I do not possess it. However, you may wait until I receive my salary and halve it with you. I will give it to you entirely, but I have children to feed.’*

Violently, ‘Aqil said, ‘You have the public treasury in your hands and you want me to wait until you receive your salary? How much is your salary? What will it be even if you give me all of it?’ Restlessly, the Imam (‘a) said, *‘you and I are exactly equal to any*

other Muslim individual with regard to the salary I take from the public treasury.'

The Imam ('a) was prospecting some chests of merchants; he therefore pointed to them and said to 'Aqil, 'If you refuse my offer, you may go down to these chests, break their locks, and take whatever therein.' 'What are there in these chests?' asked 'Aqil. 'There are funds of the merchants,' answered Imam Ali ('a).

Surprisingly, 'Aqil said, 'Do you want me to break the chests of people who had depended upon the Almighty and put their funds therein?' Answering him, the Imam ('a) said, *'Do you want me to open the funds of the Muslims and give you their shares? They have also depended upon the Almighty and locked on them. If you wish, you and I will unsheathe our swords and leave for Al-Hirah where there are rich merchants! We may attack them and take their money!'* 'Aqil answered, 'Have I come to you to steal?' The Imam ('a) answered, *'To steal from one person is better than stealing all Muslims!'*

'Aqil did not have any further excuse to make; he therefore asked the Imam's permission to go to Mu'awiyah. The Imam ('a) permitted him and asked his son Al-Hasan to give him the expense of this journey.[110]

Thus did Imam Ali ('a) refuse any sort of favoritism, because all people were alike in his view.

Another picture of his amazing justice is that a guest was hosted by Imam Al- Hasan ('a) who borrowed a rotl (a unit of weight) of honey from Qambar, the keeper of the public treasury. When Imam Ali ('a) distributed the public treasury, he discovered that a rotl of honey was missing. When he asked Qambar about it, the latter explained the situation. Immediately, Imam Ali ('a) summoned his son and asked him bitterly,

'What for have you taken from the public treasury before distribution?' Imam Al-Hasan ('a) answered, 'We do have a share in this. If we take some, we will definitely return it.' When Imam Ali's rage

calmed down, he said gently, 'May your father be ransom for you! Even if we have a share in this, it is not permissible for us to utilize our share before all other Muslims do.'

The Imam ('a) then gave Qambar one dirham and asked him to buy the best kind of honey. When Qambar did, the Imam ('a) put it in the sac and tied it.111

One day, an amount of money was brought to Imam Ali ('a) from Isfahan (a city of western Iran). He divided it into seven parts and distributed it on the people of Al-Kufah. In the middle of the money, he found a loaf of bread; he therefore divided it into seven parts and distributed it equally.112

One day, Qambar, the Imam's servant, came to his master and took him from the arm, 'O Leader of the Believers, you do not keep any thing of the treasury for yourself or for your household who definitely have a share in this. I therefore have hidden something for you.'

'What is it?' asked the Imam ('a). 'You may come with me and see,' answered Qambar, who led the Imam ('a) to a chamber full of golden plates and gilded silver. Once his eyes fell of these, the Imam ('a) flamed up with rage and rebuked Qambar, saying, *'May your mother weep for you! You wanted to lead a great flame of fire to my house!'* The Imam ('a) then weighed these things and distributed them among the people.113

Knowledgeability

Despite their divergence in trends, historians have unanimously agreed that Imam Ali ('a) was the most knowledgeable of all Muslims and the most versed in religious sciences and all fields of knowledge. His scientific faculties cannot be found with any other person, including all the companions of the Holy Prophet.

Talking about this knowledgeability, Imam Ali ('a) has said,

I have hidden knowledge; if I disclose it, you will start trembling like ropes in deep wells.[114]

On another occasion, he (‘a) has said,

Ask me before you miss me! Because, by Allah, who has my life in His hands, if you ask me anything between now and the Judgment Day or about the group who would guide a hundred people and also misguide a hundred people I would tell you who is announcing its march, who is driving it in the front and who is driving it at the rear, the stages where its riding animals would stop for rest and the final place of stay, and who among them would be killed and who would die a natural death.[115]

On a third occasion, he (‘a) has said,

By Allah, if I wish, I can tell every one of you from where he has come, where he has to go, and all his affairs, but I fear lest you abandon the Messenger of Allah - peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his progeny - in my favor. I shall certainly convey these things to the selected ones who will remain safe from that fear.[116]

Quick-Wittedness

Imam Ali (‘a) was known for his quick-wittedness. He used to solve the most complicated problems instantaneously, especially in the field of the laws of inheritance. Therefore, some of his questions are called *‘the instantaneous questions’ or ‘the minbar questions’*, because he answered them without need to make a single move.

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) was asked about a jurisprudential issue, but he hurried to his house and then came out with a smile. Having found it strange, some of the attendants asked, ‘O Leader of the Believers, whenever you were asked a question, you would answer as swift as a heated die!’ The Imam (‘a) answered, *‘I was suffering strangury, and a stangurious cannot give a wise answer.’*[117]

Imam ‘Ali With The Advent Of Islam

As he came with the new religion, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) convulsed Makkah with a new ideology, social system, and economic system. He devastated the unfounded beliefs of the chiefs of this community and eliminated their habits and traditions.

First, he destroyed the idols they used to worship. The first call of the Holy Prophet (S) was to abandon worshipping such lifeless statutes and idols and to worship the Creator of all beings and the only One Who can grant benefit and repel harm.

The Holy Prophet (S) also called for liberating the slaves and the enfeebled ones whom had been disgraced and belittled in the community of the pre- Islamic era. Thus, the Holy Prophet (S) adopted the issues of these people, deemed them equal to the other social classes, and conveyed to them the good news that they would be the chiefs of the new community that believes in Islam.

The Holy Prophet (S) also raised the slogan of woman liberation. In the pre- Islamic era, women were subjected to various sorts of bruTalibty, inequality, and belittlement. For instance, some people used to bury the female newborns alive, believing that they bring nothing but shame and disgrace to their fathers.

Other people deprived women of receiving any amount of their legal inheritances. Others would marry their fathers' widows automatically. Another aspect was that the marriage of any woman was controlled by her father or brother who would seize her dower if he wished, or prevent her from marrying her entire lifetime.

When Islam came, all such inhumane traditions and behaviors were deemed forbidden and illegal. Thus, Islam has liberated women and granted them their dues.

Another principle for which the Holy Prophet (S) called was social equality and classlessness. Islam has thus declared all human be-

ings as equal to each other apart from their nationalities, races, and colors. Hence, in Islam there is no difference before law between a ruler and a subject.

The Holy Prophet (S) also raised the slogan of protecting the human rights and helping the weak against the persecuting strong.

The Holy Prophet (S) also forbade usury, which was prevalent in the economical relationships before Islam. He (S) declared that such usurious transactions bring about poverty and create a certain class of people who have sway over the other classes.

Consuming intoxicants was so common in the pre-Islamic community; therefore, the Holy Prophet (S) shocked these people when he declared all intoxicating beverages illegal to consume.

The other most manifest aspects that the Holy Prophet (S) carried with him when he first promulgated for Islam were the forbiddingness of exploitation, the elimination of poverty, and the spread of science and knowledge.

Describing the religion of Islam, Imam Ali ('a) says,

This Islam is the religion that Allah has chosen for Himself, developed before His eyes, preferred as the best among His creations, and established its pillars on His love. He has disgraced other religions by giving honor to it. He has humiliated all communities before its sublimity; He has humbled its enemies with His kindness and made its opponents lonely by according it His support. He has smashed the pillars of misguidance with its columns. He has quenched the thirst of the thirsty from its cisterns, and filled the cisterns through those who draw its water.

He made Islam such that its constituent parts cannot break, its links cannot separate, its construction cannot fall, its columns cannot decay, its plant cannot be uprooted, its time does not end, its laws do not expire, its twigs cannot be cut, its parts do not become narrow, its ease does not change into difficulty, its clarity is not affected by gloom, its straightness does not acquire curvature, its wood has no crookedness, its vast paths

have no narrowness, its lamp knows no putting off and its sweetness has no bitterness.

It consists of columns whose bases Allah has fixed in truthfulness and whose foundation He has strengthened, and of sources whose streams are ever full of water and of lamps, whose flames are full of light, and of beacons with whose help travelers get guidance, and of signs through which a way is found to its highways and of watering places which provide water to those who come to them.

Allah has placed in Islam the height of His pleasure, the pinnacle of His pillars and the prominence of His obedience. Before Allah, therefore, its columns are strong, its construction is lofty, its proofs are bright, its fires are aflame, its authority is strong, its beacons are high and its destruction is difficult. You should therefore honor it, follow it, fulfill its obligations and accord the position due to it. 118

On another occasion, Imam Ali ('a), thanking Almighty Allah for enduing His servants with the religion of Islam, says,

Praise be to Allah Who established Islam, made it easy for those who approach it, and gave strength to its columns against any one who tries to overpower it. So, Allah made it (a source of) peace for him who clings to it, safety for him who enters it, argument for him who speaks about it, witness for him who fights with its help, light for him who seeks light from it, understanding for him who provides it, sagacity for him who exerts, a sign (of guidance) for him who perceives, sight for him who resolves, lesson for him who seeks advice, salvation for him who testifies, confidence for him who trusts, pleasure for him who entrusts, and shield for him who endures.

It is the brightest of all paths and the clearest of all passages. It has dignified minarets, bright highways, burning laps, prestigious field of activity, and high objective. It has a collection of racehorses. It is approached eagerly. Its riders are honorable. Testimony (of Allah, the Prophet, etc.) is its way, good deeds are its minarets, death is its extremity, this world is its race-course, the Judgment Day is its horses and Paradise is its point of approach. 119

It goes without saying that Imam Ali (‘a) would not have described the religion of Islam so highly unless he had certainly had full acquaintance with it and believed in its principles and goals.

Imam Ali; The First To Pray With The Holy Prophet

All traditionists and historians agree unanimously on the fact that Imam Ali (‘a) was the first to perform a prayer with the Holy Prophet (S) in the Sacred House of God.120 Revealing this fact, historians have mentioned the names of those who witnessed this incident.

‘Afif Al-Kindi has reported the following:

Before the victory of Islam, I once came to Makkah to purchase some clothes and perfumes for my wife. I thus came to Al-’Abbas ibn Abd Al- Muttalib, who was a merchant, and sat with him while my eyes were focused on the Ka’bah. It was midday when a young man came, raised his sight towards the sky, and stood up facing the Ka’bah. Before long, a boy came and stood to the young man’s right side.

Then, a woman came and stood behind them. When the young man bowed, the boy and the woman bowed. When he raised his head, the boy and the woman did. When he prostrated, they also prostrated. Surprisingly, I said, ‘’Abbas, this is a marvelous thing. Is it not?’ Al-’Abbas agreeing to my opinion said, ‘Yes, it is. It is indeed a marvelous thing. Do you know this young man?’ As I answered negatively, Al-’Abbas said, ‘This is Muhammad the son of Abdullah. He is my nephew. Do you know the boy? He is Ali my nephew.

Do you know the woman. She is Khadijah the daughter of Khuwaylid, the young man’s wife.’ Referring to Muhammad, Al-’Abbas continued, ‘This young man who is my nephew has

told me that his lord, the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth, has ordered him to follow this religion. I swear by God that none on this earth is following this religion except these three persons.'121

Proving this fact, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud is reported to have recounted this incident:

The first time I knew about the Holy Prophet (S) was when I, accompanied by some of my relatives, came to Makkah. As we were advised to meet Al- 'Abbas ibn Abd Al-Muttalib, we went to him to find him sitting near the Zamzam Spring. We thus sat with him. Meanwhile, we saw a white-faced young man' coming to the Ka'bah from the gate known as Bab Al-Safa.

We also saw a teenage beardless boy walking to his right side. They were followed by a veiled woman. The young man went towards the Black Stone and kissed it. The boy and the woman did the same after him. They young man then circumambulated the Holy House seven times, and so did the boy and the woman.

Upon seeing this, we asked Al-'Abbas, 'We do not have any idea about the advent of such a religion amongst you. Has any thing new happened?' Answering us, Al-'Abbas said, 'This young man is my nephew Muhammad, the boy Ali the son of Abu Talib, and the lady Khadijah''

I swear this by Allah: as much as we knew, no one on this globe worshipped God through this religion except these three persons.122

This virtue is peculiarly Ali ibn Abi Talib's. None of the other Companions or any other person had ever won its like.

Despite his deviation from the line of Imam Ali ('a), Sa'd ibn Abi-Waqqas confessed of this fact. One day, he passed by a group of people who were encompassing a rider who went on reviling at Imam Ali ('a). Without delay, Sa'd said to the rider:

'O man! On which basis are you reviling at Ali ibn Abi Talib? Was he not the first to accept Islam? Was he not the first to perform prayers with the Messenger of Allah? Was he not the most ascetic of all people? Was he not the most knowledgeable of all people? Was he not the Holy Prophet's son- in-law; that is the husband of the Prophet's daughter? Was he not the standard-bearer in all of the Prophet's campaigns?'

Then, Sa'd faced the Kiblah direction, raised his hands towards the sky, and prayed to Almighty Allah saying, 'O Allah! This man is swearing at one of Your saints. So, please, do not allow this group to separate from one another before You show them Your omnipotence.'

In a little while, the animal of that rider threw him to his head on some rocks, causing his head to split.[123]

Imam Ali ('a) accompanied the Holy Prophet (S) since the first spark of his promulgation for Islam. Adolescent and youthful, Imam Ali ('a) believed with full awareness in the mission of Islam that was impressed in his inner self.

Imam Ali And The 'Warning Of The Relatives'

When Almighty Allah ordered His Prophet (S) to call his near relatives to this religion by revealing to him this holy verse:

'And warn your nearest relations (26:214),'

The Holy Prophet (S) told Imam Ali ('a) about this divine command.

Let us read the whole story as reported by Imam Ali ('a):

When the verse: ***'And warn your nearest relations,'*** *was revealed, the Holy Prophet (S) summoned me and said, 'O Ali, Almighty Allah or-*

dered me to warn my nearest relations, but I was depressed since I had realized that they would answer me disgracefully whenever I would call them to this matter. Hence, I tried to evade it until Archangel Gabriel came and threatened my Lord's chastisement if I would not carry out.

Now, I ask you to prepare some food on which you should cook a leg of a sheep and make us a skin of milk. Then, you should invite the sons of Abd Al-Muttalib so that I will speak to them and convey this mission.' I carried out the Holy Prophet's orders completely and invited the sons of Abd Al-Muttalib who were about forty men.

Abu Talib, Hamzah, Al-'Abbas, and Abu-Lahab were also invited. As they all were present, the Holy Prophet asked me to serve them the food that I had prepared. With his teeth, he incised that piece of meat, threw its parts on the edges of that trencher, and said, 'Here you are, by the Name of Allah.' They all ate to excess. By Allah I swear, each one ate as much as I had cooked for all of them.

Then, the Holy Prophet asked me to serve them with that milk. They all drank from that skin. I swear by Allah, each one drank full skin of milk. As soon as the Holy Prophet tried to speak, Abu-Lahab interrupted and said, 'See how your man cast witchcraft on you.' Therefore, they left before he could speak to them.

The next day, the Holy Prophet said to me, 'You saw how that man interrupted me. Today, you should prepare food as same as you did yesterday and invite them again.' I did the same and invited them, and they came, ate and drank. The Holy Prophet then spoke, 'O sons of Abd Al-Muttalib!

By Allah, I do not know an Arab man who can bring to his people a matter better than what I am bearing to you. I am conveying to you the welfare of this world as well as the Hereafter. Almighty Allah has ordered me to invite you to this matter. Who will support me in this affair and he will be my brother, successor, and next-in-line amongst you?' I was the youngest among them when I shouted, 'O Messenger of Allah, I will be your supporter in this affair.'

Hence, the Holy Prophet grasped me from the neck and said, 'This is truly my brother, successor, and next-in-line amongst you. So, you must listen to and obey him.'

But they began to laugh at me, left the place, and said to my father, 'He has ordered you to listen to and obey your son!' 124

At the least, these words prove that Imam Ali ('a) is the true successor to the Holy Prophet (S) and the true leader of the Muslim community after him.

Cruel Procedures Against The Holy Prophet

The polytheists of Quraysh agreed unanimously on resisting the Holy Prophet (S) through all means possible. They therefore tortured physically the youths, women, and slaves who followed the Holy Prophet (S).

They then ordered their boys to throw stones, dust, and ash on the Holy Prophet (S). In order to release themselves from the responsibility of these acts, they used to apologize to Abu Talib, the Holy Prophet's protector and defender that they had nothing to do with these acts; rather, their boys and children did so, and such categories of people are not responsible for their acts!

Opposing these boys and children, Imam Ali ('a), who was a boy too, used to attack these boys violently and assail them with blows and kicks. Hence, whenever the Holy Prophet (S) walked, Imam Ali ('a) would be behind him. When these boys saw Imam Ali ('a), they would run away to their parents in order to avoid his strikes.

The polytheists of Quraysh then accused the Holy Prophet (S) of insanity in order to intervene people from contacting with him. When this accusation was proven false, due to the great menTalibty and the shrewdness of the Holy Prophet (S) that everyone

had to confess, the polytheists of Makkah accused him of sorcery. Once again, nobody believed this false accusation.

They then turned to the youths, women, and slaves who believed in the Holy Prophet (S) and wreaked their wrath on them. This act forced a group of Muslims to immigrate to Abyssinia (currently Ethiopia) under the instruction of the Holy Prophet (S). Among these Muslims was Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, Imam Ali's brother. However, the attempts of the polytheists of Quraysh to convince the king of Abyssinia to give these Muslims up failed.

The polytheists then agreed upon detaining the Holy Prophet (S) and his family members in an area outside Makkah between two summits. This area is called the Col of Abu Talib. In this area, the Holy Prophet (S) and his household were put under arrest in order to prevent them from associating with the other people.

They also decided not to give any person in marriage to any male or female from the Holy Prophet's tribe, Banu-Hashim. They also imposed on people not to deal with them at all. These decisions were then hanged to the inside of the Holy Ka'bah.

Suffering the most brutal sorts of persecution and suppression, the Holy Prophet (S) and his household had to live in that col for two or more years. During this period, Lady Khadijah the Holy Prophet's wife spent whatever she had in possession on them until all her possessions ran out.

How great this lady is and how great benefits she did for Islam and Muslims!

Almighty Allah then revealed to termites to consume that vicious document. When the Holy Prophet (S) told his uncle and defender, Abu Talib, about this matter, he hurried to the chiefs of Quraysh and conveyed this news to them. Hurriedly, they went to see the document. They found it as exactly as what Abu Talib had told them.

Some of them therefore demanded the others to raise the siege on the Hashimites, but Abu-Jahl opposed. However, the Hashimites were set free and they left that area after they had suffered very much.

Abu Talib and his sons protected the Holy Prophet (S) and helped him go on inviting people to the new religion. As for Abu Talib, he always encouraged the Holy Prophet (S) to continue in carrying out his divine mission. As for Abu Talib's sons, they did not stop protecting and defending the Holy Prophet (S) with all means possible.

The incident that saddened the Holy Prophet (S) very much was the passing away of Abu Talib and Lady Khadijah in a period of three days.125 Due to this great misfortune, the Holy Prophet (S) called that year as the year of sadness. Thus, the Holy Prophet (S) lost the man who used to defend and protect him and the woman who used to cover all his financial needs.

Due to the passing away of Abu Talib, the polytheists of Quraysh agreed unanimously on assassinating the Holy Prophet (S). He therefore decided to flee from Makkah and migrate to Yathrib where he had many supporters who had believed in his religion and been ready to sacrifice their souls for him.

Having held a meeting in their headquarters, the chiefs of Quraysh decided to gather forty persons from the various tribes of Quraysh and commission them to attack the Holy Prophet (S) and assassinate him in his bed. By doing so, they thought that the relatives of the Holy Prophet (S) would not be able to avenge him, because all the tribes would have a share in this assassination.

Almighty Allah then informed His Prophet about this plot and ordered him to leave to Yathrib.126

The polytheists had appointed a certain night on which their plot should be put into action. At that night, they stealthily surrounded the Holy Prophet's house, waiting for dawn in order to

attack the house and tear the Holy Prophet's body with their swords.

Imam Ali Sacrifices His Life For The Holy Prophet

The Holy Prophet (S) ordered Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) to replace him, spend that night on his bed,127 and cover himself with the Holy Prophet's green garment so that the assassinators would think that the Holy Prophet (S) was still there. By doing so, the Holy Prophet (S) would survive that assassination and leave safely.

Imam Ali ('a) not only obeyed the Holy Prophet's order but he also was full of joy because he would sacrifice his life to save him.

The Holy Prophet (S) left his house while they were encompassing it, took a handful of dust and threw it on their filthy faces while repeating this holy verse:

'And We have made before them a barrier and a barrier behind them, then We have covered them over so that they do not see. (36:9)'

Actually, the act of Imam Ali ('a) when he replaced the Holy Prophet (S) and spent that night in his bed in order to give the false impression to the assassinators that the Holy Prophet (S) was still there is considered one of the brightest pages in the book of his sacrifices for Islam and one of his unmatched virtues. About Imam Ali's protecting the Holy Prophet (S) with his soul, Almighty Allah has revealed in His oft-repeated Quran a verse that immorTalibzes this situation. Hence, the Holy Quran reads:

And among men is he who sells himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Affectionate to the servants. (2:207)

Al-Ghazzali writes in his book entitled Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din:

At the night when Ali ('a) replaced the Holy Prophet (S) and spent that night on his bed, Almighty Allah revealed to Archangels Gabriel and Michael, saying, 'Today, I have established brotherhood between you two and I have extended your lives, one longer than the other. Of the two of you, which one will sacrifice his life for the sake of the other?'

Both of them said that they loved their lives and refused to part with their life for the sake of the other. Then, Almighty Allah revealed, 'Will you both not be like Ali whom I made Muhammad's brother and he preferred the Prophet's life to his own and slept on the Prophet's bed exposing himself to the risk of being mistaken to be the Prophet and thus slain?

Go down on earth and protect him from the mischief of his enemies.' Archangel Gabriel stood at the head and Archangel Michael stood at the foot of the bed, even as Ali ('a) slept on the Prophet's bed. They said, 'Congratulations, Ali! Almighty Allah joins His angels in praising you.' At that time, this verse was revealed:

And among men is he who sells himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Affectionate to the servants. (2:207) [128]

This incident also reveals that Imam Ali ('a) is the second personality in the mission of Islam. He replaces the Holy Prophet (S), represents him, and takes his place in all affairs. Finally, this virtue has played a major role in the promulgation for Islam and no one could ever gain its like.

Back to the incident, Imam Ali ('a) spent that night sleeplessly, praying to Almighty Allah to save the Holy Prophet (S) from this ordeal. His supplication at this night was the following:

O He beside Whom there is no god to be prayed! O He above Whom there is no creator to be feared! O He below Whom there is no deity to be revered! O He Who has no viceroy that can be bribed! O He Who has no

companion that can be intermediated! O He Who has no doorkeeper to be called! O He Who gives not but generously and liberally no matter how many the demands are! O He Who deals not with numerous sins but mercifully and kindly![129]

It is also reported that Imam Ali ('a) said the following supplicatory prayer at that night:

O Allah, I have begun this evening seeking refuge with Your invulnerable security, that is neither touched nor caught, against the evil of all oppressive and domineering ones from among all of Your animate and inanimate creatures both the silent and the speaking; and being in protection against all terrifying things; and being in the complete garb of my loyalty to the Household of Your Prophet; and veiling myself against all those who intend harm to me, behind an impervious wall, which is my sincerity in the profession of their (Divinely commissioned) right (of leadership) and my adherence to their Rope, and bearing with certainty that the Right is theirs, with them, in them, and amid them.

I thus accede to those whom they accept and depart those whom they depart. O Allah, protect me, in the names of them, against the evil of all that which I fear, O All-great. I am restraining the enemies against me through the Originator of the heavens and the earth; 'And We have set a bar before them and a bar behind them, and (thus) have covered them so that they see not. 'O Most Merciful of all those who show mercy![130]

Imam Ali ('a) remained in that place. When it dawned, the assassinators attacked the Holy Prophet's bed (where Imam Ali slept) unsheathing their swords. Like a lion, Imam Ali ('a) got up from the bed, unsheathing his sword. When they saw him, they were astounded. Out of their cowardice, they shouted at him, 'Where is Muhammad?' Violently, Imam Ali ('a) replied, *'Have you appointed me as his guard?'*

Thus, the criminals, defeated and followed by disgrace and shame, went back to their houses.

In the meantime, the Holy Prophet (S) was on his way to Yathrib. He headed for a mountain and entered a cave therein. He was accompanied by Abu-Bakr who was encompassed by terror and fear from the tyrants of Quraysh. Having noticed so, the Holy Prophet (S) tried to calm him down by saying, 'Do not panic. Allah the All-exalted is with us.'

About this incident, this holy verse was revealed:

If you will not aid him, Allah certainly aided him when those who disbelieved expelled him, he being the second of the two, when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion, 'Grieve not! Surely, Allah is with us.' So Allah sent down His tranquility upon him and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see, and made lowest the word of those who disbelieved; and the word of Allah, that is the highest; and Allah is Mighty, Wise. (9:40)

Paying no heed to anyone, the Holy Prophet (S) moved along towards Yathrib. When he reached there, he was received so warmly that all the inhabitants of this city went out to welcome him with cheerful exclamations and pleasant faces. In Yathrib, the Holy Prophet (S) could find protection, security, thorough response to his call, and strong faith. These factors delighted him very much.

Imam Ali Migrates To Yathrib

When the Holy Prophet (S) left Makkah to Yathrib, he ordered Imam Ali ('a), who was still in Makkah, to give back the trusts of people to them and to settle his debts. In the square of Makkah, Imam Ali ('a) stood up courageously and shouted, 'Whoever has a trust with the Messenger of Allah may now come to me and receive it.'

After carrying out this duty, he gathered the women of the Holy Prophet's household and led them to Yathrib. Seven persons from

the tyrants of Quraysh followed him to prevent him from traveling. Bravely and determinedly, Imam Ali (‘a) faced them and could kill one of them. Having seen this, the others ran away.131

Imam Ali (‘a) thus led the women to Yathrib. It is also said that he had reached Quba before the Holy Prophet (S) arrived in Yathrib.132

When the Holy Prophet (S) was informed about the arrival of Imam Ali (‘a), he ordered to lead Imam Ali to him. However, the Holy Prophet (S) was told that Imam Ali (‘a) was too tired to walk.

Therefore, the Holy Prophet (S) came to him and wept for him because his feet were swollen because of covering all the distance between Makkah and Yathrib walking. The Holy Prophet (S) then took some of his saliva and put it on Imam Ali’s feet. Since then, Imam Ali (‘a) had never seen any fatigue in his feet.133

Establishment Of A Mosque

In Yathrib (lately called Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah), the Holy Prophet (S) started establishing his great state that adopted positively and applicably the human rights, dignity, security, luxury, and teaching. First, he (S) founded a mosque to be the center of his government. From this mosque, all decisions were taken, all laws were enforced, and all treaties and truces were concluded.

Imam Ali (‘a) was one of those who participated in building the Prophet’s Mosque.

Islamic Brotherhood

As soon as he resided in Al-Madinah, the Holy Prophet (S) declared the principle of Islamic brotherhood. Practically, he brought into fraternal association between each couple of Muslim individuals; one from the Muslims of Makkah who had emigrated

to Yathrib and another from the inhabitants of Yathrib who supported and received his companions and him.

In other words, he fraternized a member of the tribe of Al-Aws with another from the tribe of Al-Khazraj; the two major tribes that lived in Yathrib. He also fraternized a member of the emigrants of Makkah (Muhajirun) with a member of the citizens of Yathrib (Ansar).

In fact, this fraternity is considered closer and firmer than family and blood ties.

No one remained except the Holy Prophet (S) who fraternized with Imam Ali (‘a) and said to him,

You are my brother in this world and the Next World. 134

- 1. Ahmad ibn Abdullah At-Tabari, Dhakha’ir Al-’Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi’l-Qurba, pp. 56; Al-Diyarbakri, Tarikh Al-Khamis 2:375.
- 2. Shaykh At-Tabrisi, I’lam Al-Wara bi-A’lam Al-Huda, pp. 194.
- 3. Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa'id 9:111; Ibn Al-Sabbagh, Al-Fusul Al-Muhimmah, pp. 22.
- 4. Al-Suyuti, Al-Jami’ Al-Kabir 6:404.
- 5. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala’l-Sahihayn 3:104; Tarikh At-Tabari 2:261;
  Al-Maqrizi, Imta’ Al-Asma’ 1:50.
- 6. Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa'id 9:100.
- 7. Tarikh At-Tabari 2:363; Al-Diyarbakri, Tarikh Al-Khamis 2:375.
- 8. Ahmad ibn Abdullah At-Tabari, Dhakha’ir Al-’Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi’l-Qurba, pp. 24.
- 9. ‘Allamah Al-killi, Kashf Al-Yaqin, pp. 105 (The English Version).
- 10. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib3:91.
- 11. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib3:92.

- 12. Ahmad ibn Abdullah At-Tabari, Dhakha'ir Al-'Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi'l-Qurba, pp. 57. Ibn kajar in Tahdhib Al-Tahdhib 7:338, and Ibn Sa'd in Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 2:26 have mentioned some physical features of Imam Ali ('a).
- 13. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 192.
- 14. Al-Jahis, Hayat Al-Hayawan 1:337.
- 15. Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 77:45.
- 16. All these educational instructions and more can be found in Tuhaf Al-'Uqul (The Masterpieces of the Intellects) by Ibn Shu'bah Al-karrani; translated into English by Badr Shahin; published by Ansariyan Publications.
- 17. See, for instance, Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 2:103; Ibn Sa'd, Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 3:14; Al- Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Um-mal 6:400; Tarikh At-Tabari 2:500' etc.
- 18. Ibn Al-Jawzi, Sifat Al-Safwah 1:162.
- 19. Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 34:255.
- 20. Ibn 'Asakir, Tarikh Madinat Dimashq 1:33.
- 21. Al-Maqrizi, Imta' Al-Asma' 1:16.
- 22. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 192.
- 23. Al-Tha'alibi, Lata'if Al-Ma'arif, pp. 12.
- 24. Al-Amini, Al-Ghadir 3:21.
- 25. Al-Baghdadi, Khuzanat Al-Adab 3:213.
- 26. Ahmad ibn kanbal, Al-Musnad 2:102.
- 27. Shaykh At-Tabrisi, I'lam Al-Wara bi-A'lam Al-Huda, pp. 187.
- 28. Periphrasis is an expression of meaning indirectly or in more words than necessary.
- 29. Al-Baghdadi, Khuzanat Al-Adab 1:154.
- 30. Al-Jahis, Al-Rasa'il 2:222.
- 31. Shaykh Al-tusi, Tahdhib Al-Ahkam 3:83; Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 20:263.
- 32. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 71.
- 33. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 96
- 34. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 161
- 35. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab 1:30.
- 36. Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Fusul Al-Mukhtarah 2:66.
- 37. Tash Kubri Zadah, Miftah Al-Sa'adah 1:89.

- 38. Al-Qalqashandi, Subh Al-A'sha 1:65.
- 39. Sahih Al-Bukhari, Kitab Al-Sulh 3:168; Sahih Muslim, Kitab Al-Jihad 3:1410.
- 40. Al-'Askari, Al-Sina'atayn, pp. 431; Ibn Al-'Anbari, ´sah Al-Waqf wa'l-Ibtida', pp. 231.
- 41. Ibn Al-Dimashqi, Jawahir Al-MaTalibb 1:267.
- 42. Ibn Al-Jawzi, Sifat Al-Safwah 1:163; Ahmad ibn kanbal, Al-Musnad 1:84.
- 43. Al-Baghdadi, Khuzanat Al-Adab 7:224.
- 44. Al-kimyari, Al-Raws Al-Mi'tar, pp. 467; Jawad Ali, Al-Mufa••Al fi Tarikh Al-'Arab Qabl Al-Islam 4:454.
- 45. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 2:366.
- 46. Ibn Al-Dimashqi, Jawahir Al-MaTalibb 1:295.
- 47. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 1:499.
- 48. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:14.
- 49. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:14; Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Amali, pp. 371.
- 50. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khi•al, pp. 546.
- 51. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq'at Siffin, pp. 133.
- 52. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi (Al-Rawsah), pp. 195.
- 53. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad, pp. 271.
- 54. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 221.
- 55. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 221.
- 56. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Letter No. 45.
- 57. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Maxim No. 236.
- 58. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 97.
- 59. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 196.
- 60. By 'Umar ibn Abd Al-'Aziz; see Ibn 'Asakir, Tarikh Madinat Dimashq 3:252 and Ibn Al- Dimashqi, Jawahir Al-MaTalibb 1:276.
- 61. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 208.
- 62. Ibn Al-Jawzi, Sifat Al-Safwah 1:198.
- 63. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Al-Thaqafi, Al-Gharat 1:99.
- 64. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab 2:49.
- 65. Ibn Al-Jawzi, Sifat Al-Safwah 1:168.
- 66. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Al-Thaqafi, Al-Gharat 1:106.

- 67. Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Amali 1:353.
- 68. Abu-Na’im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 3:236.
- 69. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 1:366.
- 70. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 1:367.
- 71. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib1:364.
- 72. Musnad Ahmad 2:351, H. 1367.
- 73. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:26.
- 74. Abu-Na’im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 1:81.
- 75. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 2:261.
- 76. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Letter No. 45.
- 77. ‘Abbas Al-Qummi, Muntaha Al-Amal 1:334.
- 78. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:29.
- 79. Musnad Ahmad 1:78.
- 80. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 1:410.
- 81. Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh Madinat Dimashq 3:236.
- 82. Al-Jahis, Al-Rasa'il 2:222.
- 83. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:20.
- 84. Al-Yaghmuri, Nur Al-Qabas, pp. 245.
- 85. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-’Iqd Al-Farid 1:102.
- 86. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:276.
- 87. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib3:439.
- 88. Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Amali 1:525.
- 89. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 6:380.
- 90. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:23.
- 91. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:24.
- 92. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib1:373.
- 93. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 36.
- 94. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi’ Al-Abrar 4:131.
- 95. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi’ Al-Abrar 4:127
- 96. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 42.
- 97. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi’ Al-Abrar 4:132.
- 98. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 82.
- 99. Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Amali 1:274.
- 100. Al-Jahis, Al-Bayan wa’l-Tabyin 2:197.
- 101. Ibn Al-Dimashqi, Jawahir Al-MaTalibb 2:129.
- 102. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:205.
- 103. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 4:349.

- 104. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:29.
- 105. Al-Irbali, Kashf Al-Ghummah, pp. 50.
- 106. Tafsir Furat, pp. 213.
- 107. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:22.
- 108. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Letter No. 45.
- 109. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib1:382.
- 110. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib1:379.
- 111. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib1:107.
- 112. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:118.
- 113. Ibn Al-Dimashqi, Jawahir Al-MaTalibb 1:273.
- 114. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 5.
- 115. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 90.
- 116. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 173.
- 117. Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Amali 2:101.
- 118. Nahj Al-Balaghah Sermon No. 195.
- 119. Nahj Al-Balaghah Sermon No. 105.
- 120. See, for instance, the following reference books: Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 2:300; Tarikh Al-
  tabari 2:55; Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidayah wa’l-Nihayah 3:27; Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al- Mustadrak ‘Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:112; Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:169.
- 121. Al-Nassa'i, Khasa'is Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 3; Musnad Ahmad 1:309; Ibn Sa’d, Al-
  tabaqat Al-Kubra 8:10.
- 122. Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa'id 9:224; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 7:56.
- 123. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:499.
- 124. Tarikh At-Tabari 2:63; Tarikh Ibn Al-Athir 2:24; Musnad Ahmad 1:63.
  It is worth mentioning that when Ibn Kathir reported this incident, he shunned mentioning the Holy Prophet’s words: ‘‘and he will be my brother, successor, and next-in-line amongst you’. Rather, he wrote: ‘‘and he will be so and so’!’ Similarly, he shunned mentioning the Holy Prophet’s words about Imam Ali (‘a): ‘This is truly my brother, successor, and next-in-line amongst you.’ Rather, he wrote down: ‘This is so

and so'!'
How spiteful this fanaticism is! It means that this man has nothing to do with following the orders of the Holy Prophet.

- 125. Al-Amini, Iman Abi Talib, pp. 261.
According to Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:25, Lady Khadijah passed away in the month of Ramadan, three years before the Holy Prophet's migration to Al-Madinah, while Abu Talib passed away three days after this date.
- 126. Al-Miqrizi, Imta' Al-Asma' 1:38.
- 127. Al-Miqrizi, Imta' Al-Asma' 1:39.
- 128. This report is also mentioned in the following reference books among many others: Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat Al-Sahabah 4:25; Al-Shabalnaji, Nur Al-Absar, pp. 77; Tafsir Al-Razi 5:223; Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:348; Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 13:191; Ibn Sa'd, Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 8:35.
- 129. Al-Nuri At-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-'Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 117.
- 130. Al-Kaf'ami, Al-Balad Al-Amin, pp. 27-8.
- 131. Sayyid Muhsin Al-Amin Al-'Amili, A'yan Al-Shi'ah 3:92.
- 132. Ibn Sa'd, Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 3:22.
- 133. Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat Al-Sahabah 4:92.
- 134. Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 2:299; Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:14.

Imam 'Ali's Military Participations

In all of the military campaigns that the polytheists of Quraysh waged against the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali ('a) stood in the side of the Holy Prophet (S) protecting and defending him. In turn, the Holy Prophet (S) entrusted the commandership of his army to Imam Ali ('a) and appointed him as his standard-bearer.

In all of these campaigns that aimed at raising high the word of God, liberating the willpower and ideology of man from worshipping the idols that affected all human brains with ideological defects and led humanity down to the level of animals, Imam Ali (‘a) had brilliant roles.

Let us now refer to some wars that Imam Ali (S) entered in defense of Islam.

The Battle Of Badr

Unquestionably, Imam Ali (‘a) was the foremost champion of the Battle of Badr and his sword harvested the heads of the chiefs of polytheism.

About the Battle of Badr, the Holy Quran reads,

And Allah did certainly assist you at Badr when you were weak; be careful of your duty to Allah then, that you may give thanks. (3:123)

Almighty Allah gave victory to the Muslims in this battle at the hands of Imam Ali (‘a) whose sword harvested the heads of the chief polytheists and could sow horror in their hearts and humiliation in their souls.

Among the many wars that the disbelievers of Makkah waged against the Holy Prophet (S) was the conflict known as the Battle of Badr. This conflict was under the commandership of Abu-Jahl, the most vehement enemy of the Holy Prophet (S). This man led a big army to protect Abu-Sufyan on his commercial journey back from Syria along with the money and goods he had brought with him from there for the chiefs of Quraysh.

The Holy Prophet (S) had ordered his companions to confiscate these money and goods so that Muslims would be financially strong and a deathblow would be targeted at the polytheists of

Quraysh. When Abu-Sufyan knew about this, he took another way that spared his life. The army of the polytheists came from Makkah towards a region called Badr where there was a famous spring.

This spring had been already controlled by the Holy Prophet (S) and his followers so as to waylay Abu-Sufyan's commercial caravan. Abu-Jahl, along with the officers of his army, decided to attack the Holy Prophet's army, because this army was little in comparison with Abu-Jahl's huge army and armaments.

So, they attacked the Muslims. In this battle, Almighty Allah decided victory to be the Muslims'; therefore, Abu-Jahl and his troops were heavily defeated and they suffered gross casualties. The Muslims could kill Abu-Jahl and many other chiefs of Quraysh and could capture seventy warriors. The dead bodies of the polytheists were thrown in a well that was situated in that region. Muslims could also take as booty the majority of the enemies' military equipments.

In this battle, Muslims suffered shortage in water; therefore, Imam Ali ('a) undertook the mission of bringing them water from a spring in that area.[1]

According to numerous narrations, the Holy Prophet (S) asked his companions, at the night before the Battle of Badr, to go to Badr Spring and bring some water. All the companions kept silent and none of them had the courage to undertake this mission. Imam Ali ('a) therefore took a skin of water and went towards that spring for getting some water. It was so murky, bitterly cold, and windy night.

When Imam Ali ('a) reached that dark, deep spring, he could not find a bucket to use for taking water. He therefore had to step down that spring and fill in the skin with water. On his way back to the Holy Prophet's camp, he faced such a strong storm that made him sit on the ground. When it calmed down, he continued marching.

Then, another storm that was as intense as the first blew so heavily that he had to sit on the ground for the second time. When it calmed down, Imam Ali (‘a) continued marching. Again, a third storm that was as intense as the previous ones blew so heavily that he had to sit on the ground. When it calmed down, he continued marching until he reached the Holy Prophet (S) who, then, asked why he had been late.

‘I faced three heavy storms that made me sit to the ground three times. I therefore had to wait until they would calm down,’ explained Imam Ali (‘a). ‘Did you know what these three storms were, Ali?’ asked the Holy Prophet (S). As Imam Ali (‘a) answered in the negative, the Holy Prophet (S) explained,

‘The first storm was Archangel Gabriel with one thousand angels who, altogether, came to greet you. The second storm was Archangel Michael with one thousand angels who, altogether, came to greet you. The third storm was Archangel Seraph with one thousand angels who, altogether, came to greet you. All these angels descended to the earth to back us.’

To this event has a scholar referred, saying, ‘Imam Ali Amir Al-Mu'minin (‘a) had three thousand merits at one night only. Similarly, Al-Sayyid Al-Himyari, the famous poet, composed a few laudatory poetic verses immorTalibzing this event:

I swear by Allah and His bounties
One should be responsible for what he says
Surely, Ali the son of Abu Talib
Has natural propensity for piety and devotion
When war is consumed by spears
And is feared by the heroes
He would walk to the opponent, carrying in the hand
A sword that is white, sharp, and glazed
Just like a lion walking between its cubs
And readying itself for hunting in the jungle
It is he (i.e. Ali) whom was greeted at one night
By Michael and Gabriel

Michael with one thousand (angels) and Gabriel
With one thousand followed by Seraph
That was at the Night of Badr when they were descended
Like birds in flocks. 2

In the morning of the seventeenth of Ramadan, the Battle of Badr broke out. First of all, three of the warriors of Quraysh advanced and challenged the Muslims by a man-to-man combat. They also specified that warriors from the descendants of Abd Al-Muttalib should face them. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (S) asked Hamzah, Imam Ali (‘a), and ‘Ubaydah ibn Al-Harith to fight. Hamzah and Imam Ali (‘a) could kill their opponents ‘Utbah and Al-Walid respectively.3

In the most intense times of the war, the Holy Prophet (S) was the best warrior and the closest to the enemies. Muslims used to seek his protection, as Imam Ali (‘a) informed.4

In this battle, Imam Ali (‘a) showed incomparable bravery and steadfastness. He was the striking power of the Holy Prophet (S). He sank in the midst of the polytheists, beheading them and sending them deadly blows. Even the angels of the heavens were astounded by Imam Ali’s heroism. Meanwhile, Archangel Gabriel cried out, ‘There is no sword but Dhu’l-Faqar 5 and there is no champion but Ali.’6

In the Battle of Badr, the polytheists were defeated. The majority of their human casualties were killed by the sword of Imam Ali (‘a), as has been confirmed by reference books of history.

It is certain that the sword of Imam Ali (‘a) during the Battle of Badr did not leave any house of the polytheists of Quraysh not bereft. The names of these victims are listed in many reference books of history of Islam.7

Besides, the Muslim army could capture seventy persons in that battle.

The polytheists of Quraysh who could escape the deadly strikes of Imam Ali's sword returned to Makkah broken and humiliated. They shed heavy tears for their dead. Their women received them with lamentation and expressions of grief for this severe loss. Hind, the mother of Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan, felt great sorrow, since her father, brother, and other family members were killed in this battle.

She thus forbade weeping for these losses so that grievance would not leave the hearts before they would revenge them on the Holy Prophet (S). Thus, the polytheists of Quraysh restarted mobilizing more troops and preparing more weapons and arms.

The Battle of Badr thus recorded a categorical victory for Muslims and a humiliating defeat for their enemies whose hearts were full of terror, while the Muslims' hearts were full of faith and certitude of victory.

Thus could Imam Ali ('a), along with the other Muslims, record a great victory, which was the first military triumph in Islam.

It is worth mentioning that the marriage of Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a) to Imam Ali ('a) took place after this battle.

The Battle Of Uhud

Under the commandership of Abu-Sufyan, the polytheists advanced to fight against the Holy Prophet (S), although this divine man had come to liberate them, save them from the fables of the pre-Islamic era of ignorance, and grant them immortal integrity and glory.

The two armies reached Mount Uhud. Talhah ibn Abi-Talhah, one of the heroes of Quraysh, raised the standard of the polytheists' army and challenged the Muslims for fighting him man-to-man. As usual, Imam Ali ('a) came to the fore, raising his voice with this challenging statement,

'By Allah, I will never leave you until I make my sword lead you immediately to Hellfire.'

Having taken the initiative, Imam Ali ('a) stroke Talhah so violently that his leg was severed. The man fell to the ground stained with his blood. When Imam Ali ('a) wanted to finish him off, he adjured the Imam by God and by the kinship to leave him; therefore, the Imam ('a) left him wounded. Before long, the man perished. This situation rejoiced all Muslims.8

By killing this foe, the polytheists felt weak and showed signs of defeat. Their standard was then raised by a number of warriors all of whom were killed by Imam Ali ('a).

The army of the Muslims settled in the versant of Mount Uhud and the Holy Prophet (S) ordered the shooters to settle on the top of the mountain so as to hold back the sneaking enemies from attacking the Muslims from the backside. With the first strikes of the battle, the Muslims commanded by Imam Ali ('a) could defeat the polytheists.

However, when the shooters saw how the enemies were defeated and forced to retreat, they left their positions and hurried to collect the spoils of the war. Seizing this opportunity, Khalid ibn Al-Walid who had led a troop of the polytheistic enemies occupied the positions left by the Muslim shooters. He then attacked the Muslim army from the rear while the absconding troops attacked the Muslims from the front.

Hence, the Muslim troops were surrounded from the both sides. In this battle, great Muslim personalities, on the top of whom was the champion Hamzah ibn Abd Al-Muttalib, were martyred. The enemies surrounded the Holy Prophet (S) and could cause him many wounds. Sparing no single effort, Imam Ali ('a) hurried to protect the Holy Prophet (S). Had it not been for Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) could have been killed there.

Abu-Sufyan, seizing this opportunity, spread the rumor that the Holy Prophet (S) was killed. As a result, the Muslims ran away leaving the Holy Prophet (S) behind them. Heavily wounded, the Holy Prophet (S) fell in a pit that was made and hidden by the polytheists.

None remained steadfast with the Holy Prophet (S) except for a few Muslims on the top of whom was Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a). The Holy Prophet (S) turned his face towards Imam Ali ('a) and asked, 'O Ali, what have the others done?' Bitterly and sadly, Imam Ali ('a) answered, 'They breached their pledge and turned on their backs!'

As a criminal gang of the polytheists attacked the Holy Prophet (S), he said to the Imam, 'O Ali, spare me fighting these.' Immediately, Imam Ali ('a) attacked them and forced them to leave the Holy Prophet (S). Another gang of fifty horsemen attacked the Holy Prophet (S) from another side. He thus said to the Imam, 'O Ali, spare me fighting these.' Imam Ali ('a), walking, attacked them and could kill ten persons; four sons of Sufyan ibn 'Uwayf and six others.

A third batTalibon attacked the Holy Prophet (S), but Imam Ali ('a) could kill the commander of that batTalibon, Hisham ibn Umayyah, and the others escaped.

A fourth batTalibon commanded by Bishr ibn Malik attacked the Holy Prophet (S), but Imam Ali ('a) could confront them and kill their commander. So, the others ran away.

Highly astonished by the sacrifices, struggle, and steadfastness of Imam Ali ('a), Archangel Gabriel said to the Holy Prophet (S), 'This situation of Imam Ali amazed even the angels!' Answering him, the Holy Prophet (S), 'What prevents Ali from showing such courage while he is part of me and I am part of him?' Gabriel expressed, 'And I am part of you both.'[9]

Throughout that horrible battle, Imam Ali (‘a) persevered in such steadfastness and defense of the Holy Prophet (S), sacrificing his soul for him, until sixteen heavy strikes befell him so violently that he each time fell to the ground, and none could help him stand up except Archangel Gabriel.10

When the war was over, Hind hurried to the dead body of the martyr Hamzah and mutilated the body so maliciously. She took out the liver and chewed it. She then cut off some of his body parts and used them as necklace! Likewise, Abu-Sufyan stopped at the dead body of Hamzah, kicked it, and showed rejoicing and gloating.

The troops of the polytheists returned to Makkah singing the songs of victory and vengeance on the Holy Prophet (S).

The Battle Of The Ditch

Also called the Battle of the Allies because all the tribes, supported by the Jews, joined in alliance to fight against the Holy Prophet (S), the Battle of the Ditch (*khandaq*) caused great horror in the hearts of the Muslims. The enemies were ten thousands while the Muslims were only three thousands. In this battle, Almighty Allah granted victory to Islam at the hands of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a). The details are as follows:

Having been informed about this alliance against him, the Holy Prophet (S) held a meeting to convey the news to his followers. Salman Al-Muhammadi, one of the loftiest companions of the Holy Prophet (S) and Imam Ali (‘a), suggested that the Muslims should dig a ditch around Al-Madinah so that the enemies would not attack them inside it.

The Holy Prophet (S) approved of Salman’s plan and, along with his followers, started digging a ditch.

When the polytheists arrived, they were astonished by this procedure, because they could not pass that ditch. Therefore, both the armies settled for exchanging darts.

The heroes of Quraysh drove their horses cross the ditch and a group of them could cross it. One of these heroes was 'Amr ibn Abd-Wudd Al-'Amiri, the most courageous horseman of the tribes of Quraysh and Kinanah. On the back of his horse, he was seen as a fortress. Having seen this, the Muslims sank in deep silence and fear crept abruptly to their hearts.

'Amr paraded, drew all attentions to him, and displayed his strength. He then despised them by saying, 'O men of Muhammad! Is there any combatant among you to fight me?'

These words rooted up the hearts of the Muslims as if they were stricken by a thunderbolt!

The man shouted again, 'Is there any combatant among you to fight me?'

Responding to the call of that man, Imam Ali ('a) the hero of Muslims and the protector of Islam stood up and said, 'O Allah's Messenger! I will fight the man.'

Yet, the Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam Ali ('a), 'He is 'Amr!'

Obeying the Holy Prophet's instruction, Imam Ali ('a) sat down.

Having not stopped his mocking statements, 'Amr shouted once more, 'O followers of Muhammad! Where is your paradise that you claim that you will join it once you are killed? Is there not any man of you who wants to win it?'

Once again, none of the Muslims opened his mouth with a single word except Imam Ali ('a) who kept on insisting on the Holy Prophet (S) to permit him to face that man.

Eventually, the Holy Prophet (S), having seen Ali's insistence and perseverance, permitted him to confront 'Amr.

Before Imam Ali ('a) advanced to face the man, the Holy Prophet (S) adorned him with the greatest of all of his medals when he (S) said,

The entire belief has come out to face the entire disbelief.11

At that time, the Holy Prophet (S) raised his hands towards the sky and prayed to Almighty Allah earnestly, saying,

O Allah, You have taken from me Hamzah on the day of the Battle of Uhud and 'Ubaydah on the day of the Battle of Badr. Please, on this day, save Ali. O Lord! Leave me not alone; and You are the best of inheritors.12

Free from even the least amount of fear, Imam Ali ('a) came to face 'Amr ibn Abd-Wudd, who was astonished by the bravery and intrepidity of this young man. He thus asked, 'Who are you?'

Sarcastically, Imam Ali ('a) replied, *'I am Ali the son of Abu Talib.'* 'Amr felt pity for him; so, he said, 'Your father was a friend of mine.' Unconcerned with 'Amr's friendship with his father, Imam Ali ('a) said, *'O 'Amr! You have taken upon yourself in the presence of your people that whenever a man from Quraysh invites you to respond to one of three things, you will do.'*

'Amr answered, 'This is true. This is my pledge.'

Imam Ali ('a) said, *'So, I invite you to accept Islam.'*

'Amr laughed and said to the Imam ('a) sarcastically, 'Do you want me to abandon the faith of my ancestors? Forget it.'

Giving 'Amr another suggestion, Imam Ali ('a) said, *'If I spare your life and refrain from killing you, will you then go back home?'*

Anger covered ‘Amr, as he was flabbergasted by the boldness of this young man. He thus said, ‘If I do so, then the Arabs will gossip about my flight!’

The third offer that Imam Ali (‘a) presented was that he said to ‘Amr, ‘*So, I challenge you in combat.’*13

Admired by the young man’s boldness and bravery, ‘Amr rode off his horse, unsheathed his sword, and struck him on the head so heavily that his strike cut lengthwise the Imam’s leather head-shield and the sword could hit the Imam’s head and cleave it. The Muslims believed that Imam Ali (‘a) died out of that strike.

Yet, Almighty Allah defended the Imam (‘a) who, in turn, struck ‘Amr so heavily that the man fell to the ground stained with his blood. Imam Ali (‘a) raised his voice with **Allahu-Akbar** (*Allah is the Most Great*) and the Muslims came back with similar shouts. Thus, the back of disbelief has been broken and its powers have been notched. Islam has achieved the biggest victory at the hands of Imam Ali (‘a).

The Holy Prophet (S), on this occasion, awarded Imam Ali (‘a) another medal that extended to cover all ages, when he said to him,

The fight of Ali ibn Abi Talib against ‘Amr ibn Abd-Wudd on the day of the Battle of the Ditch is the best deed of all the deeds of my community up to the Resurrection Day.14

Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman, the distinguished companion of the Holy Prophet (S), said about this situation,

If the virtue of Ali’s killing ‘Amr on the day of the Ditch were to be distributed among all Muslims, it would cover them all.15

About the exegesis of this holy Quranic verse:

‘And Allah sufficed the believers in fighting (33:25),’

Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas said, ‘This verse means that Almighty Allah sufficed them by Ali ibn Abi Talib.’

Even ‘Amr ibn Abd-Wudd’s sister took pride in Imam Ali’s has been the killer of her brother. She said, ‘’Amr’s killer is definitely a noble person with high moral values!’

When people said that the killer was Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a), she composed the following couplets:

If ‘Amr’s killer was anyone other than Ali,

I would have cried for him forever

But his killer is he who has no faults

And his father is known as chief of Makkah.16

On the same occasion, Imam Ali (‘a) could kill another hero of Quraysh; namely, Nawfal ibn Abdullah.

Thus, the troops of the polytheists retreated with humiliation after they had won nothing at all in this battle, while the Muslim troops lost nothing at all.

The Conquest Of Khaybar

After the successive defeats of the polytheists of Quraysh, the Holy Prophet (S), due to his perception and perspicacity, noticed that Muslims would not be able to establish their state and Islam would not prevail as long as the Jews formed a confronting power against him. He therefore led his army to occupy the fortresses of Khaybar, the center of the power of the Jews.

He first entrusted the commandership of his army to Abu-Bakr. Yet, he came back defeated and failing after he could not surpass the fortresses of Khaybar. The next day, the Holy Prophet (S) gave

the commandership of the army to 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab who, just like his friend, returned defeated and failing.

After these failures, the Holy Prophet (S) declared that he would nominate the commander who should be given victory by Almighty Allah. He thus said,

Tomorrow, I shall give the Standard to a person who loves Allah and His Prophet and who is loved by Allah and His Prophet. He will not come back before Allah will grant him victory![17]

After this announcement by the Prophet (S), the matter was on everyone's tongue. There was an element of expectancy in the atmosphere. Every Companion wished that he would be the lucky person tomorrow to hold the standard in his hand. None thought that Ali's name would come up, because Ali ('a) was suffering inflammation of the eyes.

With the first sparks of morning, the Holy Prophet (S) asked about Ali ('a). When he was told that Ali ('a) was complaining about eye inflammation, he (S) asked someone to fetch him. When Ali ('a) presented himself before the Holy Prophet (S) while his eyes were tied, the Holy Prophet (S) removed that tie and applied his saliva on the inflamed eyes. They were healed at once. He then said to Ali ('a), 'Take this standard so that Allah will grant victory at your hands.'

Complying with the Holy Prophet's order, Imam Ali ('a) asked, 'O Allah's Messenger! Shall I fight them until I make them follow our faith?'

Answering him, the Holy Prophet (S) said, 'Advance in this way until you descend into the open space before them. Then, you should invite them to embrace Islam and tell them about their duties towards Allah if they accept. By Allah, if Allah guides to Islam one person only, this will be better for you than having the best kinds of camels.'[18]

Rapidly and proudly, Imam Ali (‘a) mended his paces towards the fortress of Khaybar, waving the standard of victory in his hand. He uprooted the great gate of the city[19] and used it as armor that protected him against the strikes and shots of the Jews.

Marhab, one of the heroes and most courageous fighters of the Jews, came towards Imam Ali (‘a), singing with these martial verses:

‘The people of Khaybar know I am Marhab.
I am armed and an experienced warrior!’

Putting on a red garment, Imam Ali (‘a) faced him and answered back with these martial verses:

‘I am that whose mother named him Haydarah
I am a male lion and valiant like tiger
Whose knuckles are strong and the neck wide
Like tiger in the jungle, ferocious to look at
I shall attack in a way to shatter your joints
And leave the adversary to be fodder for the wild beasts
Like a honorable and strong youth
I shall use my sword on the columns of the infidels
And slay you with my sword on a large scale.’

Taking the initiative, Imam Ali (‘a) hit Marhab on the head, cutting lengthwise his helmet, hood, and head. Immediately, he fell to the ground knocked down and stained with his blood. The Imam (‘a) finished him off and left him soulless body.

Thus, Almighty Allah granted Muslims victory, opened before them the invincible fortress of Khaybar, and humiliated the Jews.

This incident, which concurred with the return of Ja’far ibn Abi Talib from Abyssinia, gladdened the Holy Prophet (S) very much. He therefore expressed, ‘I really do not know which incident is more contented to me; the return of Ja’far or the conquest of Khaybar.’[20]

The Military Expedition Against The Banu-Quraysah

One of the tribes of the Jews who caused danger to the Muslims, the Banu- Quraysah plotted many conspiracies openly and secretly against the Holy Prophet (S). When he received a divine command to wage war against them, the Holy Prophet (S) asked Imam Ali ('a) to advance before him and bear the standard. When Imam Ali ('a) faced them, he could hear them speak ill of the Holy Prophet (S).

He therefore returned to the Holy Prophet (S) and said, 'O Allah's Messenger, it will not harm you if you avoid coming closer to these filthy ones.' The Holy Prophet (S) asked, 'Why is that? I believe you have heard something evil from them.' 'Yes, I have,' answered Imam Ali ('a). The Holy Prophet (S) said, 'Had they seen me, they would not have said such words.'

The Holy Prophet (S) then applied a twenty-five day siege on them; therefore, they were extremely exhausted. Nevertheless, they refused the three suggestions that Ka'b ibn Sa'd, one of their chiefs, had offered to them.

Eventually, they had to submit to the Holy Prophet's judgment about them. The Holy Prophet (S) entrusted the issuance of such judgment to Sa'd ibn Mu'adh who judged that their men should be killed, the possessions distributed among the Muslims, and their women and children taken as captives.

After obtaining the Holy Prophet's ratification of this judgment, Imam Ali ('a) executed the death penalty and killed these evil people with his sword.

The Military Expedition Against Banu'l-Nadir

The Banu'l-Nadir is another Jewish tribe who incurred the animosity of the Holy Prophet (S); therefore, he led a group of his followers, on the top of whom was Imam Ali ('a), to take blood money (a fine paid to the next of kin for the slaughter of a relative) according to a previous agreement. When the Holy Prophet (S) sat under a wall in their quarter, some of them agreed to throw a rock on his head from the roof.

The Divine Revelation informed the Holy Prophet (S) about this conspiracy whose implementation was entrusted to 'Amr ibn Jahhash. As a result, the Holy Prophet (S) left that place and returned to Al-Madinah.

Imam Ali ('a) hurried to kill that Jewish who had attempted to assassinate the Holy Prophet (S). Having seen this, the members of the gang ran away. When Imam Ali ('a) asked the Holy Prophet (S) to permit him to chase them, he was given permission. Along with a group of the Muslim army, Imam Ali ('a) could catch these criminals before they could enter their fortresses. Thus, Imam Ali ('a) could kill them all and take control of their fortresses.

The Military Expedition Against Wadi Al-Qira

After he had conquered Khaybar, the Holy Prophet (S) came to a town called Wadi Al-Qira that was inhabited by Jews. When he invited them to the religion of Islam, they refused and readied themselves for fighting him. Eleven men from the Jews were killed in that encounter, some of whom were killed by Imam Ali ('a).

Thus, the Holy Prophet (S) conquered their lands and Muslims could win spoils of war. However, the Holy Prophet (S) endued them with the favor of having in possession their lands and ranches of date-palm trees. He thus treated them as same as he did with the people of Khaybar.

Imam Ali Conquers Yemen

Along with a batTalibon, the Holy Prophet (S) sent Imam Ali to Yemen to invite its people to Islam or to encounter a war. Before he headed for Yemen, Imam Ali ('a) said this supplicatory prayer:

O Allah! I am turning my face to You, for I have put my trust in none save You, I have had no hope save in You, I have no power on which I should rely, and I have no other means to which I should resort save my plea for Your favors, my petition for Your mercy, and my reliance upon your most pleasant kind acts to me.

You know best what will happen to me in this going of mine, whether I like or dislike it. Whatever Your omnipotence brings forth to me, You are always praised for Your trial and I am always subject to Your determination. You erase whatever You wish and establish what You wish, and with You is the basis of the Book.

O Allah! Please, keep away from me all the predetermined ordeals and the entrances to every hardship. Expand over me a part of Your mercy, an opening out of Your favor, and a gentle amount of Your pardon, so that I will not long for hastening that which You have delayed or delaying that which You would hasten.

Include this with Your response to what I have besought You to take my place among my family and dependents and to fend off all vicissitudes that may sadden me with the best way You have ever given to a faithful believer who is away from his homeland. I thus beseech You to immunize me against all defects, cover up all my sins, forgive all my acts of disobedience to You, and save me from all tribulations that I dislike.

Then, please grant me opportunity to thank You for all that, to remember You, to worship You duly, and to be pleased with all of Your predeterminations. O patron of the believers! Please, make me, as well as all that which You have given me the right to use, my sons, and all that which You have granted me, including the faithful men and women, to be under Your protection that is never vulnerable, Your shield that is never

accessible, Your neighborhood that is never reachable, Your immunity that is never revocable, and Your covering that is never exposed.

Indeed, whoever is put under Your protection, shield, neighborhood, immunity, and covering, will always be safe and sheltered. There is neither might nor power except with Allah the All-exalted and All-great. 21

Once Imam Ali (‘a) arrived in Yemen, he met the chiefs of this country and offered them to accept the Holy Prophet’s invitation to the religion of Islam. Highly impressed by the morals and virtue of Imam Ali (‘a), the people of Yemen responded to him. Hence, all of the members of the Hamdan tribe converted to Islam and abided by its principles. Thus, Imam Ali (‘a) succeeded in conquering Yemen without fight.22

The Conquest Of Makkah

After the government of the Holy Prophet (S) had extended to include the majority of the regions of the Arabian Peninsula, he decided to conquer Makkah, the center of polytheism. He therefore advanced towards the city followed by a huge, well-armed army of about ten thousand soldiers. This advancement was kept secret; lest the polytheists of Makkah would prepare themselves to face the Holy Prophet’s army militarily.

However, katib ibn Balta’ah wrote a letter to the chiefs of Makkah informing them about the Holy Prophet’s military advancement towards them. When the Divine Revelation informed the Holy Prophet (S) about this, he ordered Imam Ali (‘a) and Al-Zubayr ibn Al-’Awwam to follow the woman who carried that letter and bring it back.

They followed the woman and could catch her. When she denied carrying such a letter with her, Imam Ali (‘a) threateningly said to her, ‘By Allah, neither the Holy Prophet nor are we accusing you falsely. Give us the letter or I will have to unveil you.’ She thus

took out the letter that she had hidden in the hair of her head and gave it to the Imam (‘a).

When the Muslim army was on the outskirts of Makkah, the Holy Prophet (S) ordered all of his soldiers to kindle fire in the darkness of night. When fires flamed, their light covered all the quarters of Makkah. Panicked by this scene, Abu-Sufyan said, ‘I have never seen such fire at any other night.’

Badil ibn Warqa', who was next to Abu-Sufyan, trying to furnish a justifying explanation, said, ‘By God, these fires must have been kindled by the tribe of Khuza’ah to declare a war.’ Disproving his explanation, Abu-Sufyan said, ‘The troops of the tribe of Khuza’ah are too little and too humble to cause such fires.’

Al-’Abbas ibn Abd Al-Muttalib, having recognized Abu-Sufyan’s voice, called at him with his epithet: ‘Abu-Hansalah!’ Abu-Sufyan answered back, ‘Abu’l-Fasl!’ Al-’Abbas said, ‘Woe to you, Abu-Sufyan! This is the Messenger of Allah leading the people. What a disgracing mourning the people of Quraysh will see if he (i.e. the Prophet) conquers Makkah by force!’ Trembling all over, Abu-Sufyan asked with a disrupting accent, ‘What should we do? May my father and mother be sacrificed for you?’

Then, Al-’Abbas asked Abu-Sufyan to ride behind him on his riding animal and led him to the Holy Prophet (S). Before the Holy Prophet (S), Al-’Abbas said, ‘I have granted this man immunity!’ Hence, the Holy Prophet (S) said, ‘Now, escort him to your place. In the morning, bring him to me.’

The next morning, Abu-Sufyan, trembling and fearing the Holy Prophet (S), was brought before him. The Holy Prophet (S) asked him, ‘Abu-Sufyan, woe to you! Have you not yet known that there is no god save Allah?’ With a low tone, Abu-Sufyan said, ‘May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! You are so lenient, so noble, and so observant of relation ties!

By God, I believe that if there had been any other god beside Allah, he must have saved me!' Answering him, the Holy Prophet (S) said, 'Abu-Sufyan, woe to you! Have you not yet known that I am the messenger of Allah?' Rudely, Abu-Sufyan answered, 'May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! You are so lenient and so observant of relation ties! By God, I have some reservation about this!'

Here, Al-'Abbas reproached Abu-Sufyan and ordered him to declare that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah; lest he would be beheaded.

Having had no other way, Abu-Sufyan had to say the two professions of faith of Islam. However, his heart was still full of disbelief.

Sa'd ibn 'Abadah, the standard-bearer, entered Makkah waving the standard in the air and shouting, 'Today is the day of the fierce battle. Today, the inviolability will be violated.'

Unpleased with this slogan, the Holy Prophet (S) took the standard from Sa'd and gave it to Imam Ali ('a) who entered the city raising his voice with this slogan: 'Today is the day of utter mercy. Today, the inviolability will be protected.'

Immediately after entering Makkah, the Holy Prophet (S) hurried towards the Holy House of God. However, 'Uthman ibn Talhah closed the gate of the Ka'bah in the face of the Holy Prophet (S) and went up to the roof, refusing to give him the key. Imam Ali ('a) hurried towards 'Uthman, twisted his hand, took the key from him, and opened the Holy Ka'bah's gate before the Holy Prophet (S), who went in and offered a two-unit prayer.[23]

Having accomplished his prayer, the Holy Prophet (S) handed the key over to 'Uthman and said, 'Today is a day of kindness and faithfulness.'[24]

The first act the Holy Prophet (S) did after he entered the Holy House of God was that he demolished and removed the idols that the people of Makkah used to worship. Hanged on the walls of the Holy Ka'bah, there were three hundred and sixty idols. The greatest idol of Quraysh; namely, Hubal, was hanged on the side of the gate of the Holy Ka'bah.

Repeating this holy verse: ***'The truth has come and the falsehood has vanished; surely, falsehood is a vanishing thing,'(17:81)*** the Holy Prophet (S) stabbed the eye of the idol with his bow and ordered this idol as well as the other idols to be demolished. He then climbed on Imam Ali's shoulder to destroy the other idols.

The Imam ('a) could not lift the Holy Prophet (S) who said to him, 'You cannot carry the load of Prophethood. Rather, you may climb on my shoulder.' Thus, Imam Ali ('a) climbed on the Holy Prophet's shoulder and started destroying these idols. About this situation, Imam Ali ('a) said, 'If I wanted, I could reach even the horizon of the sky.'

The Imam ('a) then uprooted the idols and threw them to the ground. None remained except the idol of the Khuza'ah, which was fastened to the base with iron stakes. The Holy Prophet (S) ordered Imam Ali ('a) to deal with that idol; therefore, Imam Ali ('a) began to move it to all sides while repeating this holy verse: ***'The truth has come and the falsehood has vanished; surely, falsehood is a vanishing thing.'(17:81)*** Finally, Imam Ali ('a) could uproot and throw it to the ground so heavily that it broke into pieces.[25]

The people of Makkah surrounded the Holy Prophet (S) to see what he should do to them. However, he issued a general amnesty for all of the people of Quraysh who had stood against him, fought him, and spent whatever they had in possession to eliminate him.

The Battle Of Hunayn

The news of the Holy Prophet's conquest of Makkah and the submission of the clans of Quraysh to him frightened the tribes of Hawazin. Malik ibn 'Awf, the chief of Hawazin, gathered the men of his tribe and asked the help of other tribes, such as the Thaqif, and led them to fight against the Holy Prophet (S).

When the Holy Prophet (S) was informed about this, he mobilized a twelve thousand soldier army and left Makkah to face the army of the Hawazin. However, this time some hypocrites and seekers for spoils of war joined his army. When he distributed the standards, he gave the standard of the Muhajirun to Imam Ali ('a).

In a valley called Hunayn, the enemies had waylaid the Muslims' army. Hence, when they arrived there, the enemies surprised them. They were defeated so heavily. However, the Holy Prophet (S) took the right side and ordered the Muslims to join him and show some steadfastness and bravery.

In this conflict, Imam Ali ('a) showed indescribable bravery; he wandered about the battlefield and killed the heroes of the enemy. All historicists have described Imam Ali ('a) as the bravest soldier in the Muslim army during that battle.26

Along with other one hundred soldiers, Imam Ali ('a) fought against the enemies so fiercely.

The hypocrites who had joined the Muslim army, such as Abu-Sufyan and Safwan ibn Umayyah, gloated over the Muslims' defeat and went on issuing statements that exposed their real views about the Holy Prophet (S).27

Almighty Allah then decided victory to be for the Muslims who could kill seventy persons of the enemies, causing the others to flee. Another group was taken as prisoners.28

To sum it up, the most eminent hero of the Battle of Hunayn was Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib('a).

Imam Ali And Surah Bara'ah

The Holy Prophet (S) appointed Abu-Bakr as his representative to the people of Makkah in the task of reciting some articles of Surah Bara'ah (*Al-Tawbah*, No. 9) regarding some new laws of circumambulating the Holy House of God.29

As soon as Abu-Bakr left to carry out this task, the Divine Revelation descended to the Holy Prophet (S) to order him to entrust this mission to Imam Ali (‘a) and to dismiss Abu-Bakr.

Hurriedly, Imam Ali (‘a) followed Abu-Bakr and could catch him in the middle of the way and take the letter from him.30

Having returned to the Holy Prophet (S), Abu-Bakr, with teary eyes and painful sadness, said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger! Has anything happened about me?’ Alleviating him, the Holy Prophet (S) answered, ‘Nothing but good! I have been ordered that none should convey that message except me or a man who is part of me.’31

The Campaign Of Tabuk

Imam Ali (‘a) accompanied the Holy Prophet (S) in all of his military expeditions except for the Battle of Tabuk, when he ordered him to stay in Al- Madinah as his representative. The hypocrites and agitators spread a rumor that the Holy Prophet (S) asked Ali (‘a) to stay in Yathrib because he hated him.

When the Imam (‘a) heard such rumors, he conveyed them to the Holy Prophet (S). Refuting these false rumors, the Holy Prophet (S) adorned Imam Ali (‘a) with an unprecedented medal when he said to him,

They are liars! I have only kept you here to take my place. So, go back and represent me among my and your folks. O Ali, does it

not please you that you are to me is as exactly as Prophet Aaron was to Moses, except that there shall not be a prophet after me? 32

Imam Ali Describes His Jihad

About his military participations with the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali (‘a) says,

In the company of the Prophet of Allah (S), we used to fight our parents, sons, brothers and uncles, and this continued us in our faith, in submission, in our following the right path, in endurance over the pangs of pain and in our fight against the enemy. A man from our side and one from the enemy would pounce upon each other like energetic men contesting as to who would kill the other; sometime our man got over his adversary and some-time the enemy’s man got over ours.

When Allah had observed our truth He sent ignominy to our foe and sent His succor to us until Islam was established (like the camel) with neck on the ground and resting in its place. By my life, if we had also behaved like you, no pillar of (our) religion could have been raised, nor could the tree of faith have borne leaves. By Allah, certainly you will now milk our blood (instead of milk) and eventually you will face shame. 33

- 1. During carrying out this mission, a divine incident happened to Imam Ali (‘a):
- 2. Translator. Quoted from: Shaykh ‘Abbas Al-Qummi, Mafatih Al- Jinan, the complete English version translated by Badr Shahin 1:835-6
- 3. Sunan Al-Bayhaqi 3:279.
- 4. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 2:64, H. 654.
- 5. It is well known that Imam Ali (‘a) had a special sword called Dhu’l-Faqar, either because his sword had segments (faqrah) similar to the vertebras, or because his sword was so deadly (faqar: death) that it would never spare the life of any one who was struck by that sword.

- 6. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 3:154; Ibn Hisham, Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyyah 3:53. Ahmad ibn Abdullah At-Tabari, in Dhakha'ir Al-'Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi'l-Qurba, pp. 74, has written down these words: 'On the day of the Battle of Badr, an angel called out from the heavens: There is no sword but Dhu'l-Faqar and there is no hero but Ali.'
- 7. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-'Amili, in his book of A'yan Al-Shi'ah 3:98-9, has listed by name thirty-four of those whom were killed by Imam Ali ('a) in the Battle of Badr.
- 8. Al-Shabalnaji, Nur Al-Absar, pp. 78.
- 9. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-'Amili, A'yan Al-Shi'ah 3:111.
- 10. Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat Al-Sahabah 4:20.
- 11. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 13:261 & 285, 19:61; Al-Qanaduzi, Yanabi' Al- Mawaddah 1:281
- 12. Al-Amini, Al-Ghadir 7:212.
- 13. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:32.
- 14. Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 13:19; Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:32.
  The Holy Prophet (S) is also reported to have said, 'A single blow of Ali with his sword upon 'Amr ibn Abd-Wudd on the day of the Battle of the Ditch is equal to the rewards of the devotional acts of the two worlds; men and jinn.' Ref. Ibn Al-Mutahhar Al-killi, Ma•abih Al-Anwar 1:254. [Translator]
- 15. Al-Jahis, Al-Rasa'il, pp. 60.
- 16. Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Amali 2:7-8.
- 17. Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 1:62; Ibn Al-Jawzi, Sifat Al-Safwah 1:163; Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:185, H. 778.
- 18. Ibn Al-Jawzi, Sifat Al-Safwah 1:164; Sahih Al-Bukhari 7:121.
  According to Al-Hurr Al-'Amili in Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 6:30, the Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam Ali ('a), 'Do not fight anyone before you offer him to embrace Islam.'
- 19. Imam Ali's uprooting the gate of Khaybar is one of his miraculous deeds. Historicists agree that this gate was so big that less that forty men would never uproot it. See for instance the following reference books: Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi,

Tarikh Baghdad 11:324; Al- Dhahabi, Mizan Al-I'tidal 2:218; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:368.
At-Tabari, in Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah (2:188) adds, 'Seventy men helped each other to return that gate to its place, after a great effort.'

- 20. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:128.
- 21. Ibn tawus, Muhaj Al-Da'awat, pp. 94.
- 22. Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Amali 1:292.
- 23. Al-Qalqashandi, Subh Al-A'sha 4:269.
- 24. Ibn Hisham, Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyyah 2:412.
- 25. Ali ibn Ibrahim Al-kalabi, Insan Al-'Ayn 3:99-100.
- 26. Al-Haythami, Majma' Al-Zawa'id 6:180.
- 27. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 2:178.
- 28. Ibn Hisham, Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyyah 4:66.
- 29. Al-Mas'udi, Al-Tanbih wa'l-Ashraf, pp. 186.
- 30. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:3; Al-Nassa'i, Kha•a'is Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 20; Al-
Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 4:246; Tafsir At-Tabari 10:46; Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi,
Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:51; Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 2:183; Sibt Ibn Al-Jawzi, Tadhkirat
Al-Khawass, pp. 37.
- 31. Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Amali 1:292.
- 32. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 2:190.
- 33. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 56.

The Departure Of The Holy Prophet

After the Holy Prophet (S) had carried out his divine mission completely, he felt that he would soon join the Almighty God and depart from this world. He therefore began to convey his last mission, although he had always confirmed the content of this mission, which is to appoint the next leader of the Muslim commu-

nity, on various occasions since the beginning of his promulgation for the religion of Islam.

In the tenth year after his emigration (i.e. Hegira), the Holy Prophet (S) decided to perform his final ritual Hajj pilgrimage. This pilgrimage is therefore called the Farewell Pilgrimage.

In this pilgrimage, he informed the Muslims that this would be their last meeting with him, saying, 'In fact, I do not know whether I will be able to meet you after this year and after this meeting.'

To establish for them the best method that will guarantee their pleasure in this world and the other world, he declared,

O people! I am leaving amongst you the two weighty things: the Book of Allah and my progeny; i.e. my Household.

Upon the accomplishment of the rites of Hajj, the Holy Prophet (S) delivered a sermon in which he summed up all the affairs of Islam and appointed the next leader whom they should follow after he would pass away.

The last statement of his sermon was as follows:

After my departure, do not return to atheism and deviation by letting some of you have power over others. I am leaving amongst you that which will save you from deviation forever if you only adhere to: the Book of Allah and my progeny; my Household. Have I conveyed?

They all shouted, 'Yes, you have.'

He (S) then said,

O Allah, be the witness. You are now responsible; so, the present must deliver this to the absent.[1]

The Meeting Of Ghadir Khumm

After he had accomplished the rites of the Hajj pilgrimage, the Holy Prophet (S) was on his way back to Al-Madinah when Archangel Gabriel descended to him, carrying a very important message from the All-exalted Lord, relating to the destiny of the Muslim community.

Hence, Almighty Allah ordered His Prophet (S) to settle in that place and appoint Imam Ali ('a) as his successor and the general authority over all Muslims. The Holy Prophet (S) was not permitted to postpone that declaration even for one moment. Hence, the Almighty Allah revealed to him this holy verse:

O Messenger! Deliver what bas been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the people; surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people.**(5:67**) 2

It was terribly hot when the Holy Prophet (S), carrying out this mission, ordered all Muslims to gather in that place that is called Ghadir Khumm. He then led a congregational prayer. Upon accomplishment, he ordered his followers to gather the loads of their camels so as to make a pulpit-like height on which he would climb and deliver a message from the All-exalted Lord.

The Muslims, who were more than one hundred thousand persons, paid attention to what the Holy Prophet (S) would say to them.

First, he praised and thanked the Lord and then reminded the audience of the troubles he had suffered for the sake of the religion. He then referred to a number of laws, regulations, and teachings of Islam.

He then asked,

See how you will regard me on the subject of the two weighty things.

'What are the two weighty things?' one of them asked. Clarifying the matter, the Holy Prophet (S) answered,

The major weighty thing is the Book of Allah. One of its edges is in the hand of the Almighty and All-exalted Lord and the other edge is in your hands. So, adhere to it firmly and you will never be misled. The minor weighty thing is my progeny. Allah the All-gentle and All-aware has informed that these two should never separate from one another until they both join me on the Divine Pond.

I also besought my Lord to grant me this favor that these two should never separate from one another. So, do not precede them lest you will perish, and do not leave them behind you lest you will perish.

Immediately after that, the Holy Prophet (S) grasped the hand of his successor and the leader of the faithful believers after him, raised it so highly that the whiteness of their armpits was seen by all people, and with a high tone said,

O People, whose right is preceded to the people's rights upon themselves?

They answered, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.'

The Holy Prophet (S) then declared and repeated three times,

Verily, Allah is my master, I am the master of the believers, and I have more right over them than what they have over themselves. Now, Ali is the master of whomever has regarded me as his master.

He then added,

O Allah, (please) be the friend of whomever befriends Ali, be the enemy of whomever incurs his animosity, bear love to whomever loves Ali, harbor hatred against whomever hates Ali, give victory to whomever supports Ali, disappoint whomever disappoints Ali, and turn the truth to follow Ali wherever he turns. Behold! The present must convey this to the absent.

By the command of the Holy Prophet (S), Muslims hurried to swear allegiance to Imam Ali (‘a) and to congratulate him for this position. Among those congratulators were the wives of the Holy Prophet 3 and ‘Umar ibn Al- Khattab who said his famous statement, ‘Felicitations, O son of Abu Talib! You have become the master of all believing men and women!’4

Hassan ibn Thabit, the poet of Islam, who was present there, composed some poetic verses on this occasion. He thus said after he had obtained the permission of the Holy Prophet (S),

On the day of Ghadir, their Prophet called them In Khumm; How great the Prophet’s call was! Saying, ‘Who is you master and leader?’
They answered and showed no negligence:
‘Your Lord is our Master and you are our Leader
And none of us will disobey you in this regard.’
He said: ‘Stand up, Ali, for I will appoint you The Imam and the guide after me
This is the leader of him whose master was I
Hence, be faithful and sincere followers of him.’
And then he prayed:’ O Allah! Support his supporter
And be the enemy of him who will oppose Ali.’

On that day too, this holy verse was revealed to immorTalibze this occasion and this day, which is annually celebrated as the Ghadir Feast:

This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion. (5:3) 5

The Endless Tragedy

When Muslims knew about the ailment of the Holy Prophet (S), they hurried to visit him. On this occasion too, he instructed them, saying,

O people! I am about to depart from this life very soon. I have already instructed you to hold fast to what will secure your felicity so that I will be excused. Verily, I am leaving amongst you the Book of Allah and my progeny; my household.

He then took the hand of Imam Ali (‘a), who was beside him, and said,

Ali is with the Quran and the Quran is with Ali. They will not separate from one another until they join me on the Pond. 6

The Holy Prophet (S) discovered that some of his Companions had decided to deprive his Household of the next leadership; he therefore decided to send them all out of Al-Madinah for encountering the Romans so that the capital would be empty of such persons when he would depart life and Imam Ali (‘a) would hold the position of leadership without disputation.

The Holy Prophet (S) thus ordered the most eminent personalities of the *Muhajirun and Ansar,* such as Abu-Bakr, ‘Umar, Abu-’Ubaydah ibn Al-Jarrah, and Bashir ibn Sa’d,7 the heads of opposition of Imam Ali’s leadership, to join that expedition under the commandership of Usamah ibn Zayd, the young man.

On the twenty-ninth of Safar, the Companions put down rebellion and refused to join the expedition of Usamah. Showing the main reason for such rebellion, ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab said to Usamah, ‘Will the Prophet depart life and you are my commander?’

Having been informed about this rebellion, the Holy Prophet (S), suffering harsh pains, delivered a speech in which he declared, ‘Mobilize the army of Usamah! Carry out my orders in this regard! May Allah curse whoever fails to join the army of Usamah!’

Nevertheless, none of those who had refused to join Usamah’s expedition changed his mind; rather, they insisted on staying in the capital.

Thus, the Holy Prophet (S) became certain of the actual intention of those who refused to leave Al-Madinah; they only intended to plot a conspiracy against Imam Ali (‘a) to deprive him of holding the position of the leadership. The Holy Prophet (S), in order to confirm this matter in a written form and prevent the implementation of such a conspiracy, said in the presence of the Companions,

Bring me a pen and a paper so that I will write down for you a document after which you will never go astray.

The Companions knew what the Holy Prophet (S) meant by these words; they were sure that he only wanted to confirm the leadership of Imam Ali (‘a) in a written document so that they would not be able to achieve their aims and take the leadership from the Holy Prophet’s Household. As a result, one of them; namely, ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab, aroused a disputation in the presence of the Holy Prophet (S) and insisted on preventing him from writing down that document. ‘Umar therefore shouted, ‘The man is hallucinating!’8

Whenever Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas mentioned this incident, he would weep heavily and say, ‘It is all because of that Thursday. What a Thursday it was! The Messenger of Allah ordered them to bring him a pen and a paper to write down a document after which they would never go astray, but they answered, ‘The Messenger of Allah is hallucinating!’’9

During the Holy Prophet’s last ailment, he was visited by his daughter Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' (‘a) accompanied by her two sons Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn. She threw herself on her father’s body and wept heavily.

The Holy Prophet (S), in these moments, prayed to Almighty Allah saying, *‘O Allah, please watch out my household!’* He then repeated three times, *‘I entrust my household with every believing man.’*10

Before he departed life, the Holy Prophet (S) had ordered Imam Ali (‘a) to take much care of his two grandsons.11

In the last moments of his lifetime, the Holy Prophet (S) asked for Imam Ali (‘a) and said to him,

Put my head in your lap, for the matter of Allah has come. When my soul leaves my body, pick it up and rub it over your face. You may then turn me towards the kiblah direction and undertake the other procedures. Before all people, you may offer a prayer on my dead body. Do not leave me before you put me in my grave. Always seek the help of Allah the Almighty and All-glorified. The Imam (‘a) carried out these instructions completely.12

Then, the Holy Prophet’s soul departed his body. That day was incomparably depressing for all Muslims. However, the most depressing was Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' (‘a). She threw herself on the sacred body and expressed her deep grief with such statements like:

Oh for my father! Oh for the Prophet of mercy! The Divine Revelation will no longer come! Gabriel will no longer visit us! O Allah, please join my soul to his soul, let me be the first to see his face, and do not deprive me of reward for my grief for him and do not deprive me of his intercession on the Resurrection Day.

Oh for my father! I announce his death to Gabriel! Oh for my father! His abode in the highest place in Paradise! Oh for my father who responded to the Lord when He called him!13

Imam Ali (‘a) took upon himself the mission of arranging for the funeral ceremonies of the body of his cousin according to his insturction. He therefore bathed ritually the Holy Prophet’s body with tearful eyes, repeating these words:

May my father and my mother shed their lives for you, O Messenger of Allah! With your death the process of Prophethood, revelation and heavenly messages has stopped, which had not stopped at the death of others

(prophets). Your position with us (the members of your family) is so special that your grief has become a source of consolation (to us) as against the grief of all others; your grief is also common so that all Muslims share it equally.

*If you had not ordered endurance and prevented us from bewailing, we would have produced a store of tears and even then, the pain would not have subsided, and this grief would not have ended, and they would have been too little of our grief for you. However, this (death) is a matter that cannot be reversed nor is it possible to repulse it. May my father and my mother die for you; do remember us with Allah and take care of us.*14

About this issue, Imam Ali (‘a) also said,

When the Prophet (S) died, his head was on my chest, and his (last) breath blew over my palms and I passed it over my face. I performed his funeral ablution-may Allah bless him and his descendants-and the angels helped me. The house and the courtyard were full of them. One party of them was descending and the other was ascending. My ears continually caught their humming voice, as they invoked Allah's blessing on him until we buried him in his grave. 15

From behind curtains, Al-'Abbas and Usamah handed over water to Imam Ali (‘a) while he was performing the funeral ablution to the Holy Prophet's body.16 During the funeral ablution, the Holy Prophet's body poured out nice smell. Upon this situation, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Allah's Messenger! You give nice smell in your life and after your death. 17

Upon accomplishment, Imam Ali (‘a) put the dead body in the shroud and then on the bed.

After the angels, the first to perform the funeral prayer on the sacred body of the Holy Prophet (S) was Imam Ali (‘a), who then allowed the other Muslims to perform similar prayers. The Imam (‘a) said to them,

Do not let any one of you lead a congregational prayer, because the Holy Prophet is your leader in his life and after his death.

Standing to the side of the sacred body, Imam Ali ('a) repeated these words:

Peace and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you, O Prophet! O Allah, we bear witness that he has conveyed to us what has been revealed to him by You, he acted sincerely towards his community, and he has striven painstakingly for Allah's sake until Allah gave victory to His religion and accomplished His Word.

O Allah, please include us with those who follow what has been revealed to him, make us stand firm after his departure, and join us to him.

After these words, the performers of the prayer would say, 'Amen.'

Upon the accomplishment of the prayer, Imam Ali ('a) dug the grave, put the sacred body in it, and covered it with soil. He then stopped at the edge of the grave and said with tearful eyes,

Certainly, endurance is good except about you; fretting is bad except over you; and the affliction about you is great while every other affliction before or after it is small. 18

Imam Ali ('a) then went to the minbar (i.e. pulpit) of the Holy Prophet's Mosque and delivered a funeral oration in praise of him.

After the departure of the Holy Prophet (S), his family members panicked very much and felt great fear from the clans of Quraysh whose chiefs had been killed by Imam Ali ('a). They knew for sure that these clans awaited any opportunity to revenge on the Holy Prophet's household.

The first night after the Holy Prophet's departure was the longest night for them. Describing this night, Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) says, 'When the Holy Prophet (S) died, his family members spent that

night with horror as if there were no sky to cover them and no land to carry them.

This is so because the Holy Prophet (S) had taken the lives of many relatives and non-relatives.'

- 1. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:90-1.
- 2. See for instance the exegesis of this holy Quranic verse in the following reference books of Tafsir: Al-Wahidi, Asbab Al-Nuzul, pp. 150; Tafsir Al-Razi 3:636; At-Tabrisi, Majma' Al-Bayan 4:344.
- 3. Al-Amini, Al-Ghadir 2:34.
- 4. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 4:281.
- 5. About the revelation of this holy Quranic verse on this day and on this occasion, refer to
  the following reference books for instance: Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 8:290; Al-Suyuti, Al-Durr Al-Manthur 2:259; At-Tabrisi, Majma' Al-Bayan 3:246.
- 6. Ibn kajar, Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah 2:361.
- 7. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 5:312; Ibn Sa'd, Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 4:46; Al-
  Diyarbakri, Tarikh Al-Khamis 2:46.
- 8. The details of this incident can be seen in the following reference books: Sahih Al- Bukhari 4:86-7, 6:8; Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Nihayah 4:130; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al- Balaghah 3:114.
- 9. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:355.
- 10. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 1:133.
- 11. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Amali, pp. 119.
- 12. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib1:29. Reports confirming the fact that the Holy Prophet (S) departed life while his head was in the lap of Imam Ali ('a) are uninterruptedly many. For instance, see Ibn Sa'd: Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 2:51; Al-Haythami, Majma' Al- Zawa'id 1:293; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 4:55; Ahmad ibn Abdullah At-Tabari, Dhakha'ir Al-'Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi'l-Qurba, pp. 94; Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah 2:219.

- 13. Al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam Al-Nubala' 2:88; Sunan Ibn Majah 1:511.
- 14. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 233.
- 15. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 196.
- 16. Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah 5:263.
- 17. Ibn Sa'd, Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 2:63.
- 18. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 302.

The Saqifah Conspiracy And The Reign Of Abu-Bakr

The first political, yet conspiratorial, conference that was held in Islam was the Saqifah conspiratorial Conference, which was held immediately after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S) and before his holy body was buried. The dispute of the conferees came to a head, since all of them tried his best to take over power but none of them said a single word of demanding to observe the interest of the Muslim nation or to guarantee its rights after it had been exposed to the astounding misfortune of losing the Holy Prophet (S), their actual savior.

No single historical document has conveyed a decisive situation of any of these conferees, even if such situation would have been demanding that the election of the next ruler should be postponed until the situations of the nation would return in good order and only then would the publics elect a leader.

A swift look into history demonstrates obviously the huge struggle for leadership of the Muslim nation between the *Muhajirun* under the leadership of Abu-Bakr, and the *Ansar* under the leadership of Sa'd ibn 'Abadah.

Under that *Saqifah* (i.e. shed), Abu-Bakr's voice was heard shouting and addressing the Ansar with the following words: 'We are the leaders and you are the vicegerents.' As understood by some

critical analysts, these words came to raise hopes of next leadership in the Ansar or to express a bribe offered to them by Abu-Bakr.

However, the most unanimous point with regard to the members of this conspiratorial meeting was that none of them paid the least attention to the custody of Muslims and none looked deeply in their social affairs and in what should be the best for them in their present and future.

In other words, all such issues were thrown in the wastebasket. In conclusion, the members of that conference dedicated all their concerns to their personal interests, leaving the public interests and the safety of the Muslim nation behind their backs.

Owing to the diplomacy, tactfulness, and coarseness of his patron and the builder of his government; namely, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, Abu-Bakr won the struggle and could seize power. However, homage was not paid to him as the next leader of the Muslim nation by many great personalities at top of whom was the chief of the Holy Prophet's Household and the divinely designated leader and commander of the faithful believers; namely, Imam Ali ibn Abi- Talibb ('a), as well as many other dignitaries like the great companion of the Holy Prophet 'Ammar ibn Yasir the notable person, Abu-Dharr Al-Ghifari the loyal companion, Salman Al-Farisi whom the Holy Prophet (S) attached to himself, and many other important personalities.

By means of violence and austerity, 'Umar coerced the publics to pay homage to Abu-Bakr as the successor to the Holy Prophet (S).

Impartially and away from any sectarial inclination or proclivity, I can say that the Saqifah Conference has undeniably kindled inextinguishable seditions among Muslims and cast them in grave cataclysms.

All the terror-stricken events that have been suffered by Muslims were direct outcomes of the Saqifah Conference. One of these

shocking events was the tragedy of Karbala' in which the Holy Prophet's privilege with regard to his sons and descendants was extremely violated when the swords of the Umayyad tyrants and their fans cut off the heads of the Holy Prophet's descendants and threw their bodies headless on the desert of Karbala'.

They then made the veiled women of the Holy Prophet's Household suffer various kinds of humiliation and disgrace that were too bitter to be described.

Referring to this horrible event, Shaykh Kashif Al-Ghita', a Shi'ite master scholar, composed a poetic line, saying:

By Allah I swear this: the tragedy of Karbala' would not have taken place had it not been for their Saqifah. The like of such branches were only the outcome of that origin.

Likewise, Paul Salamah, a famous Lebanese poet, has composed the following couple of verses:

Under that Saqifah, many events followed in succession, bringing into surface many tendencies and hidden feelings. Since that day, many inclinations have dispersed just like the branches of fresh boxthorn that are thorny and barbed.

If truth be told, the Saqifah Conference was the exordium of all the devastating catastrophes that have been suffered by Muslims since the dawn of their history and hitherto.

It seems disloyal to the nation, history, and science to keep some of such great events that are connected to our intellectual and doctrinal lives concealed from people or to enfold their affairs and causes without exposing them to study and analysis. In fact, concealment of such events is eradication of facts, seducing the nation into ignorance, elimination of the reason-based judgments, and exclusion of the scientific methodologies in forming a free opinion about the events.

The Saqifah Conference has been one of the most sensitive events in the history of Muslims; it is therefore indispensable to study it honestly and truthfully on the light of intellectuality and science, away from sectarial inclinations. Certainly, to study and ponder over this event, along with its details, will beget fruitful outcomes to the Muslim nation one of which should be reunification and concord.

It is also illogic to agree with those who claim the necessity of canceling out, ignoring, and avoiding investigating any aspect of this event, because, as is justified by those who adopt such a claim, it causes damage to the dignity of some Sahabah (companions of the Holy Prophet) and injures their standings and holiness. Assuredly, such claim is irrelevant, because any scientifically based research is too fair to intend offense of any person, because it is required to demonstrate the facts that are concealed from people.

What really causes damage, disunity, and offense is deception and concealment of the truth by casting curtains on whatever is expected to benefit people and correct their doctrines and beliefs.

Thus, to demonstrate the facts of history as exactly as they are and clear of telling lies or showing malice neither sows disunity nor beaks off any tie.

Motives Of Holding The Saqifah Conspiratorial Meeting

Many motives made the Ansar hasten to organize their meeting without any delay and not even waiting for the Holy Prophet's body to be laid in the final abode. Some of them are as follows:

1. They realized the political step that the people of Quraysh had taken against Imam Ali ('a) and the plot they had devised. That is why they unanimously decided to keep away caliphate (i.e. succession to the Holy Prophet and leadership of the Muslim com-

munity) from the Imam (‘a), and signs of disobedience became apparent in them. That is why they avoided joining the army of Usamah and they prevented the writing of the document that the Holy Prophet (S) desired in order to ensure the security and well being of the community.

It is very likely that the Ansar, before the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S), had understood the animosity of the Muhajirun towards Imam Ali (‘a). They knew that they would not obey the Prophetic commands with regard to Imam Ali (‘a) and would not accept his authority because he had killed their ancestors in the holy wars and routed their elders in the establishment of the authority of Islam.

‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan once said to Imam Ali (‘a), ‘What can I do when the people of Quraysh do not like you, since you had killed their seventy warriors in the Battle of Badr, whose faces where like shining gold earrings and their noses were rubbed on the ground before their lips?’1

‘Uthman thus described the hatred of the people of Quraysh towards Imam Ali (‘a) regarding those whom were killed in the Battle of Badr; those whose faces shone due to their beauty and joy like gold trinkets while they were thrown head long to the ground and subjected to humiliation. Without any doubt, they were sure that Imam Ali (‘a) could only be the one who had killed their men and the people of Quraysh were going to seek revenge for the blood that the Imam (‘a) had shed.

Al-Kinani, a poet from the clans of Quraysh, composed some poetic verses encouraging the people of Quraysh to take revenge from Imam Ali (‘a) for the blood he had shed of their ancestors:

In every gathering, you have humiliated those great personalities that have hurt the eyes.
How good you were! Do you not remember when you were emancipated slaves of a great personality?
Shame on you! Do you not recall that which when a free man remem-

bers, he feels ashamed?
This is the son of Fatimah 2 who has beheaded and destroyed you and in revenge of which he has not been beheaded.
Where are those stalwarts that faced difficulties and where is the honor of the land of Makkah? 3

Ibn tawus has narrated on the authority of his father who once asked Imam Ali ibn Al-Husayn Zayn Al-'Abidin ('a), 'Why do the people of Quraysh dislike Ali so much?'

Imam Zayn Al-'Abidin ('a) answered, 'This is because he sent the first of them to Hellfire and the last of them he humiliated...'4

In any case, the Ansar realized that the Muhajirun had devised an evil plot against Imam Ali ('a) and that they should not accept his authority although it was openly and imperatively announced on the Day of Ghadir Khumm by the Holy Prophet (S).They said, 'Muhammad thought that this matter was to be completed for his cousin. Far from it that it should be fulfilled.'

The Ansar became certain that if the Muhajirun took the rein of Caliphate, the Ansar would have to bear terrible difficulties due to their regard for Imam Ali ('a). Therefore, they organized a meeting to select their own candidate for the post of caliphate.

2. On the basis of the information received from the Hoy Prophet (S), the Ansar were certain that the Holy Prophet's Household would not be able to get the caliphate and that they should be deprived after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S).

Shaykh Al-Mufid, a Shi'ite scholar, narrated that during the last ailment of the Holy Prophet (S) when only his uncle Al-'Abbas, his cousin Al-Fasl, Ali ibn Abi Talib, and some close family members were left alone in the company of the Holy Prophet (S), Al-'Abbas said to him, 'If this matter after you is decided among us, let us know about it; and if you know that we shall be defeated in it, inform us about it.'

The Holy Prophet (S) replied, **'After me, you shall be oppressed.'**[5]

Before that too, the Holy Prophet (S) had announced this fact among the Muslims. Thus, the Ansar themselves resorted to precaution and organized a meeting of their own so that they might obtain power and the Muhajirun might not precede them in this matter.

3. The Ansar were the strong pillars of the Islamic military. They had devastated the attacks of the people of Quraysh, routed their elders, and killed their stalwarts in large numbers. Hence, they knew that if the people of Quraysh were to gain power over them, they would definitely subject them to the worst circumstances and extract the most terrible revenge from them.

This matter is clearly delineated in the statement of Al-Habbab ibn Al-Mundhir who said, 'We fear that after you, someone comes to power whose sons, fathers, and brothers we have killed.' This prophecy became a reality, because not much time had passed when the reign of the caliphs had barely ended that the kingdom reached into the hands of the Umayyad dynasty who began to oppress the Ansar and subject them to poverty and needfulness.

Mu'awiyah tried his utmost to extract revenge from them and when after him the power was transferred to Yazid, he continued the same attacks on them. Their wealth and property were destroyed and their blood was shed in the plunder of Al-Madinah. It was such a terrible incident that it has no equal in history.

4. The Holy Prophet (S) had concluded that the Ansar would suffer very much after him. He therefore said to them, **'After me, you shall suffer very much. So, be patient until you meet me on the Divine Pond.'**

These were some factors that caused the Ansar to organize a meeting of their own and they endeavored by it to conceal their secret plans.

Political Statement Of Sa'd

When the Aws and Khazraj, the two major tribes of the Ansar, came together to the Banu-Sa'idah Shed (*i.e. Saqifah*), Sa'd ibn 'Abadah, the chief of the Khazraj tribe, made the opening statement of the meeting and, as he was indisposed, he was unable to speak in a loud voice.

His words were repeated by one of his aides. Sa'd delivered a speech in which he enumerated the virtues of the Ansar and tried to prove that they deserve the position of succession to the Holy Prophet (S) than anyone else. He said,

'O groups of the Ansar! In this religion, you have precedence and you have excellence in Islam. No other Arabs have such excellence. The Holy Prophet (S) lived amongst his people for more than ten years, inviting them to abandon the faith of idolatry and to worship Almighty Allah alone.

However, except for a few of them, none helped him. They could neither give strength to his religion, nor remove his afflictions, nor defend him. When Almighty Allah decided to grant you merit, He drove honor and reward to you only. He exclusively endued you with His bounties and gave you faith in His Prophet, belief in Him, and defense of His Messenger.

He also conferred upon you the merit of defending his companions, according honor to his religion, and fighting his enemies. All these merits were given to you specially. You thus were the ones toughest for his enemies until all Arabs willingly or unwillingly submitted to the command of Allah and the people in far-flung areas with degradation had begun to obey.

Then, the Arabs embraced this religion and submitted to the Messenger by your swords' In this matter of leadership, you alone should take it upon yourself as you are more deserving of it than all others.'[6]

Sa'd's speech entails that he considered the struggle of the Ansar and their bravery in defense of Islam and the Holy Prophet (S) to have been an honor for them to hold the position of leadership. Actually, the Ansar had a greater share in the way of the spread of Islam. That is why they were more preferable to the Holy Prophet (S) and more deserving to the next leadership.

Criticism Against Sa'd

Among the criticisms leveled against Sa'd is that he ignored the Holy Household ('a) and did not make any reference of Imam Ali ('a). He also feigned ignorance about the Imam and made an invitation for himself and his people.

The first arrow that was aimed at the Ahl Al-Bayt (i.e the Holy Prophet's Household) was on that day when the Ansar and the Muhajirun intentionally closed their eyes to the superiority of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) so that they would hold the position of leadership for themselves and that they might benefit from the rewards of wealth and gifts of that position.

In any case, Sa'd went to such an extent in feigning ignorance about the right of Imam Ali ('a) and deviated so much into mistake, while we do not pay any attention to this act of his. Through his act, he made the community sink into mischief and calamities and a great trouble befell it, because this position had been earlier decided for Imam Ali ('a) openly by Almighty Allah and the Holy Prophet (S).

Sa'd received the punishment of his deed; as soon as Abu-Bakr came to power, he immediately chased Sa'd who thus became helpless and at last he had to relocate to Syria from Al-Madinah. Then, Khalid ibn Al-Walid went along with him from among his friends.

In the dark of the night, they sat in ambush for him, attacked, and killed him. They composed some couplets gloating over their act

of killing him. They claimed that the jinn killed Sa'd!

It is so strange that the political power of that time managed to secure the services of the jinn and made them a medium of their deeds. Some people, having little intelligence, accepted this explanation without pondering over the political situation of that time.

Weakness Of The Ansar

The Ansar did not possess a firm determination and steadfastness; they were unaware of the political matters. In spite of their large numbers, they were fraught with weakness and sloth. On the basis of what historicists say after the discourse of Sa'd, there were arguments among themselves. Some of them predicted that the Muhajirun would provide this argument:

'We are the Emigrants (i.e. Muhajirun); the foremost companions of the Prophet, his clan, and his devotees. Why do you, the Ansar, then not accept our claim, and instead you contest with us on the issue of the next leadership?' Others said, 'In that case, we shall say that let there be a leader from us and a leader from you and we shall not accept anything less than this.'

Having noticed such weakness and collapse among his people, Sa'd angrily said, 'This is the beginning of weakness.'[7]

Indeed, the beginning as well as the end was weak because of their weak morale, dispersal of their rows, and their lack of steadfastness that became apparent in the political field. When they had organized their own meeting and kept it a top secret so that they, before the people of Quraysh, could learn about the events that were to come, they might have obtained political supremacy.

However, in this contest, they had to face humiliation. They did not gain anything out of it and finally they lost their one and only opportunity to gain power. When the Muhajirun arrived in the meeting without prior information, differences and arguments

erupted among the Ansar. The Muhajirun very soon had control of the situation and the reins of government in their hands.

Jealousy And Enmity

Another factor that contributed to the defeat of the Ansar was their internal jealousy and malice. Since antiquity, there was a great hostility between the Aws and the Khazraj tribes-the two major tribes that comprised the Ansar among the inhabitants of Al-Madinah. The enmity was so severe that it often led to blood-shed.

According to historians, the last battle fought between these two tribes in Yathrib was six years before the Immigration of the Holy Prophet (S) and his companions. When the Holy Prophet (S) arrived in Al- Madinah and witnessed such enmity between the Aws and Khazraj that even a slightest provocation led to violence, he tried his utmost to forge a bond of friendship among them.

Though they agreed to a truce, it was still fragile; and when two people of rival tribes came face to face, they betrayed their inner malice for each other. According to historians too, there were many occasions when this latent malice developed into arguments and fights. This same rivalry came out in the open on the day of Saqifah.

When Khusayr ibn Usayd, the leader of the Aws who had extreme dislike for Sa'd, saw that his people had selected him as their candidate for caliphate, he said to them, 'If caliphate goes to Sa'd even once, his tribe will gain such a merit that you will not have any share in it. So, get up and pay homage to Abu-Bakr as the next leader'' 8

This shows the hidden enmity that the Aws had against the Khazraj. It was such a thing that was very distasteful for the chief of the Aws. That is why he, along with his people, paid allegiance

to Abu-Bakr. If it had not been so, caliphate would not have gone to Abu-Bakr.

In addition, some people of the Khazraj tribe also harbored malice towards Sa'd and considered the position of the next leadership too high for him. Bashir ibn Sa'd, one of the members of the Khazraj tribe, was an important rival of Sa'd; he paid allegiance to Abu-Bakr, thus destroying the work of Sa'd.

In any case, these rivalries and malice were among the reasons for Abu-Bakr having gained the position of caliphate, but not any member of the Ansar.

'Umar's Planning

'Umar was instrumental in performing a dangerous and significant maneuver in order to control the situation; he laid a hurdle in every matter that led to the appointment of a successor to the Holy Prophet (S), because his partner in this mission; namely, Abu-Bakr, at the time of the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S) was not in Al-Madinah; rather, he was in a region called Al-Sunh, one mile away from Al-Madinah.

So, 'Umar sent a man to bring Abu-Bakr to Al-Madinah, but he feared that before Abu-Bakr could return, someone else might arrive in the field. Therefore, he stood in the street in a horrified condition and began to roam the lanes, waving his sword and announcing loudly,

'Some hypocrites have claimed that the Messenger of Allah has passed away! By Allah, the Prophet is not dead; rather, he has gone to his Lord, just like (Prophet) Moses the son of 'Imran' By Allah, the Messenger of Allah will soon return. Whoever claims that he is dead, I will cut off his limbs.'

Whosoever said that the Messenger of Allah has passed away was threatened by 'Umar's sword and was chastised by him.[9]

People were frightened and they fell into doubt. They were surrounded by waves of perplexity and they could not decide whether to believe the claim of 'Umar, which was their favorite wish, or to believe what they had seen with their own eyes that the Holy Prophet (S) lay in his bed at home without making any movement.

'Umar was agitated like thunder and lightning and he was so excited that his mouth was foaming. He continued to threaten any one who dared to make any statement about the passing away of the Messenger of Allah (S). Not much time passed when his friend and companion, Abu-Bakr, arrived from Al-Sunh and along with him went to the Prophet's quarters.

Abu-Bakr removed the cloth from the Prophet's face and became certain of his demise. He came out to the people and refuted the claim of 'Umar. Then, he addressed the groups of people who were compelled to keep quiet even though they were devastated by the passing away of the great one who had brought salvation to them:

'Whoever worshipped Muhammad, Muhammad is now dead. Whoever worshipped Allah, then Allah is ever-living and He never dies.'

Abu-Bakr then recited these words of Almighty:

And Muhammad is no more than an apostle; the apostles have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allah in the least; and Allah will reward the grateful. (3:144)

'Umar did not raise any objection and he agreed and testified to it; he said to the effect: 'By Allah, it was not but that when I heard the news of the passing away of the Prophet, my legs gave way and I fell down and my legs were not able to move.'[10]

Some Important Points

If we ponder deeply over these astonishing steps taken by Abu-Bakr and 'Umar, we shall be able to note some important points that are worthy of attention and research and they are as follows:

1. 'Umar became an absolute denier with all certainty of the death of the Holy Prophet (S). He claimed that the Prophet went to his Lord just like Prophet Moses and that he would indeed return to the earth. He warned with dire consequences all those who dared to oppose his claim.

Without any doubt, this act definitely does not prove his faith in the Prophet's being alive; rather, it shows his pursuit of an opportunity to reach his aim and it was in perfect accordance with his plan that he had hatched with his group that consisted of persons like Abu-Bakr and Abu-'Ubaydah.

The following points prove this matter:

A) 'Umar was among those who waited for the Prophet's demise, and he had asked Usamah, 'The Messenger Allah is dying; are you going to be my chief?' He said these words while the Messenger of Allah (S) was still alive and he became sure of the Prophet's death when the Prophet spoke to the people about his imminent end and informed them about the signs of his approaching death as we have explained in the foregone pages.

B) 'Umar had stood at the side of the Messenger of Allah (S) during his final ailment and he had prevented the writing of the document that the Holy Prophet (S) intended to ensure that people should not go astray after him. 'Umar interjected and said, 'The Book of Allah is sufficient for us!' It is but natural that he made this statement while he had become certain of the Prophet's imminent death.

C) The Book of Allah has announced that every human being would have to taste death. Almighty Allah thus says:

'Every soul must taste of death. Then, to Us you shall be brought back. (29:57)'

The Almighty Allah has also said especially regarding His Messenger:

'Surely, you shall die and they (too) shall surely die. (39:30)'

'And Muhammad is no more than an apostle; the apostles have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed will you turn back upon your heels? (3:144)'

These Quranic texts are recited in the light of the day and the darkness of the night repeatedly. Was 'Umar unaware of these verses while he used to hear them day and night and he used to frequent the company of the Holy Prophet (S)?

D) Finally, 'Umar's silence and cooling of his temper as soon as his friend arrived while he had already announced the return of the Holy Prophet (S) shows that he was acting according to a premeditated plan. He did not say a word against what Abu-Bakr said about the fact of the Holy Prophet's passing away.

2. The declaration of 'Umar that the Holy Prophet (S) would return and his warning that he would sever the limbs of any one who said that the Prophet had died-these two points had no weight at all, because cutting off the limbs and impaling are applied to one who abandons his faith or one who spreads mischief in the land. To say that the Messenger of Allah (S) had died does not render one liable for such a penalty.

3. Abu-Bakr, in his statement on the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S), said, 'Whoever worshipped Muhammad, Muhammad is now dead; but whoever worships Allah, then Allah is everliving and He never dies.' This proves that there is no mention

anywhere of any Muslim ever claiming to worship the Holy Prophet (S) or considering him in place of Almighty Allah. Rather, all Muslims are unanimous that the Holy Prophet (S) is the servant of Allah and His messenger and that the Almighty had selected him to convey His revelations and to act as His prophet.

The Ansar Surprised

While the Ansar were busy in their machination in Saqifah in order to win the position of leadership, 'Uwaym ibn Sa'idah Al-Awsi and Ma'an ibn 'Adi, who were confidants of the Ansar but friends of Abu-Bakr and members of his group since the time of the Holy Prophet (S), without any announcement they came out of the Saqifah meeting while their hearts were full of enmity and malice towards Sa'd.

They came running to Abu-Bakr and 'Umar and informed them about the Saqifah gathering. Abu-Bakr and 'Umar became very much disconcerted at this. Along with the Abu-'Ubaydah ibn Al-Jarrah and Salim the manumitted slave of Abu-Hudhayfah, they hastened towards the Saqifah and some other people from the Muhajirun followed them. They found the Ansar gathering at their meeting place.

The Ansar were shocked and the face of Sa'd paled; he feared that leadership would go out of his hand, because he had already been aware of the weakness, disunity, and mutual differences of the Ansar. They had organized this meeting and kept it top secret from the Muhajirun, but now their unexpected arrival was going to render all their planning ineffective and in spite of all of their efforts to obtain allegiance, they failed.

Abu-Bakr's Discourse

After the arrival of the Muhajirun in the meeting of the Ansar, 'Umar wanted to begin the discourse, but Abu-Bakr restrained him, because he was aware of his acerbic tongue and this would not have in any way solved the impasse in such a delicate situation. It was necessary to observe diplomacy and soft words in order to benefit from the situation. Thus, Abu-Bakr with a smiling face and sweet words began to address the gathering in a kind way:

'We, the Muhajirun, are the first people to become Muslims and with regard to our origin and lineage we are the most respected of them. From the viewpoint of clans, we are in the limits of moderation and from the aspect of faces more beautiful than they are. With regard to the Messenger of Allah (S), we are most proximate of him and you are our brothers in Islam and our partners in religion. You have helped and supported.

May Allah give you a good reward for this! Thus, we are the rulers and you are ministers. The Arab people shall not follow anyone except this branch of Quraysh. Do not be disheartened by what the Almighty has given superiority of your brothers, the Muhajirun, over you. I have selected one of these two to be the next leader: i.e. 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab and Abu-Ubaydah ibn Al-Jarrah ''11

Research And Investigation

It is necessary to stop here for a few moments and ponder over the above statement of Abu-Bakr:

1. Abu-Bakr has not accorded any significance to the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S). This was a great tragedy for the Muslims and the most terrible incident, which had aggrieved the hearts of all Muslims. Therefore, to suit the situation, he should have first paid condolence at the passing away of the one who had brought salvation for them and he should have remembered his favors to them.

He should have reminded them of the good works he had done in their religious and secular spheres. After that, he should have invited them to participate in the funeral rites of the Holy Prophet (S) so that he might be consigned to his eternal abode. After that, he should have organized a general meeting, which all classes of Muslims could have attended and invited them to select a caliph according to their choice, if we condescendingly accept that the Holy Prophet (S) had not already appointed any successor after him.

2. The logic of this discourse is pursuit of power and seeking of a political post. Apart from this, he did not give any importance to anything. He tried to convince and advise the Ansar that for the benefit of the Muhajirun they must let go of the claim for leadership and may not share the seat of power with them.

However, he gave them the good news that they would be their ministers. As soon as power was established for them and they formed their government, they denied the Ansar their rights and did not entrust any official post to them. Moreover, the Ansar were deprived of all governmental posts they formerly held.

3. This speech did not once mention the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a), the equivalents of the Holy Quran, the like of Noah’s Ark in this community that whosoever boarded it was saved and whosoever avoided it was destroyed and drowned, as the Holy Prophet (S) had informed.

For this, the most preferable thing would have been to wait for sometime so that the funeral processions of the Holy Prophet (S) would be over and the opinion of the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) had also been sought, so that caliphate could have obtained legality and it would not have been considered a mistake as ‘Umar then described it, saying, ‘Indeed, the allegiance to Abu-Bakr was a mistake, but Almighty Allah saved the Muslims from its mischief.’

Sayyid Abd Al-Husayn Sharaf Al-Din, commenting on the negligence of the Holy Prophet’s Household, says,

Even if it is assumed that there did not exist specific nomination for the next leadership in favor of anyone from the family of the Holy Prophet and even if it is assumed that they did not have any precedence over the other companions with regard to their origin and lineage, or morals and valor, or knowledge and good deeds, or faith and sincerity; was there any legal or rational hindrance that the allegiance should have been postponed until the Holy Prophet (S) would be buried?

Or was it not possible that in order to maintain peace, the matter of the next leadership was to be postponed temporarily? Would such amount of restraint not have been suitable for the Holy Prophet's family members who were in mourning, while these members were the trust of and the closest people to the Holy Prophet (S)?

Almighty Allah has said:

'Certainly, an Apostle has come to you from among yourselves; grievous to him is your falling into distress, excessively solicitous respecting you; to the believers (he is) compassionate, merciful. (9:128)'

The least duty of the community towards the Holy Prophet (S) who had borne severe hardships for his people and always cared for their well being should have been that his Progeny would not be caused grief and would not be deserted in the way they were deserted, while their wound was yet fresh and the Prophet (S)had not been buried yet.12

4. The argument that Abu-Bakr offered to advocate the superiority of the Muhajirun against the Ansar was that the Muhajirun were much nearer to the Holy Prophet (S) in relationship than the Ansar were. Naturally, this claim was more applicable to the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), because they were the closest in relation to the Holy Prophet (S), since they were his family members. Focusing on this point, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

They argued by the tree but destroyed its fruit.

Imam Ali (‘a) is also reported to have said these two poetic verses to Abu- Bakr,

If you have argued on the basis of family relationship, there are others who are closer in relation to the Prophet than you are.

And if you have obtained dominance on them by consensus, the people whom are the worthiest of being consulted were absent at the time of consultation.

On another occasion, Imam Ali (‘a) declared,

By Allah, I am verily the Holy Prophet’s brother, heir, cousin, and inheritor of his knowledge. Who may then have a greater claim than mine?

At any rate, these people intentionally or unintentionally neglected the Holy Prophet’s Household. As a result, they were the origin of all problems faced by the Muslim community since that day and up to the day when Almighty Allah shall inherit the earth.

5. In his statement, Abu-Bakr nominated ‘Umar and Abu-’Ubaydah ibn Al- Jarrah to the position of the next leadership. If truth be told, this was a brilliant point, because he divested himself of any political desire, invaded the inner selves of the Ansar, and had power over their emotions and feelings.

Tactfully, ‘Umar answered him, ‘This shall never take place as long as you are alive. No one shall be competent enough to drag you from the place in which the Messenger of Allah had put you!’

Commenting on this statement of ‘Umar, a historicist says, ‘We do not know when the Holy Prophet (S) placed Abu-Bakr in such a position or at least referred to this. In fact, Abu-Bakr was just like the other Muhajirun no more than a soldier under the commandership of Usamah ibn Zayd. Had the Holy Prophet (S) nominated Abu-Bakr to this position, he would have at least ordered

him to stay in Al-Madinah and would not have ordered him to join that battle.'

Abu-Bakr Wins Power

Abu-Bakr succeeded in his discourse through which he was able to get control over the situation. In that speech, he praised the Ansar and extolled their struggle for the religion. He thus could cool the flames of uprising that raged in their hearts. In the same way, he made them hopeful of some share in the coming government by saying that they should be ministers.

As a result, he was able to remove their animosity towards the Muhajirun in the matter of the next leadership and their personal ambitions to obtain political power. He explained to them that he had preferred the Muhajirun because the Arabs would not accept anyone as their ruler except one belonging to the tribe of Quraysh; the Holy Prophet's tribe.

This ironically means that the position of ruling the Muslim community belonged to the Arabs only and the other people had no right in it!

This was the most important point to which Abu-Bakr called the attentions of the Ansar and in this way presented himself as the most suitable candidate for the next leadership. At the same time, he pretended to be uninterested in any political desire. By this tactic, he was able to gain power over the Ansar and he also earned their regard. When some people from the Ansar condemned swearing allegiance to Abu-Bakr, 'Umar violently stood up to speak,

'It can never be that two persons occupy one position. By Allah, the Arabs will never agree to give you leadership while their Prophet was from a people other than you. However, they shall not object if this position is held by one from the group to which the Prophet belonged.

For any one who refrains from this, we have a clear argument against and a clear power over him. Who can oppose us in obtaining the kingdom of Muhammad while we are his friends and partners? None does but one who prefers falsehood or one who is led to sinfulness and who throws himself into destruction!

There is nothing new in this discourse except that it emphasizes what Abu- Bakr had said before; namely; the Muhajirun were more deserving of the succession to the Holy Prophet (S) than anyone else and that they were his friends and partners.

Commenting on these situations, Muhammad Al-Gilani, a professor, says:

As an argument against the Ansar, 'Umar used the proximity of the Muhajirun to the Holy Prophet (S) in spite of the fact that Ali ibn Abi Talib was more deserving of the next leadership according to this argument, because it had already been used in case of the Prophet's inheritance.

Besides, Al-'Abbas ibn Abd Al-Muttalib was the closest in relation to the Prophet (S) and thus the most deserving among the people to hold this position. However, he gave this right to Ali and from this it became established that the post of leadership should be solely the right of Ali.13

'Umar had not finished his words when Al-Habbab ibn Al-Mundhir stood up to speak, saying, 'O groups of the Ansar, keep hold of your right and do not listen to this man or his companion, because they will deprive you of your share in this matter. Thus, if they do not accept what you want, chase them out of this land and gain dominance over them.

By Allah, you are more deserving than they are in this matter, because it was through your swords that people embraced Islam while previously they had no faith. I am the best refuge and more far-sighted than they are. I am a lion among the cubs. By Allah, if

you wish, I can strip them off like a barren tree. By Allah, if anyone refutes my statement, I shall cut off his nose with the sword''

This statement, which was full of anger and warnings, was a challenge to the Muhajirun to an assured conflict from the people of Al-Madinah. At the same time, it was a self-praise in their valor.

'Umar replied to him and screamed, 'In that case, Allah shall kill you.'

Al-Habbab said, 'Rather, He shall kill you.'

Abu-Bakr anticipated any development in the situation; therefore, he turned his face towards the Ansar and could calm down the situation. Immediately, the members of his group, fearing that the situation might go out of control, acted as swiftly as lightning and paid homage to Abu-Bakr.

The first to swear such allegiance were 'Umar, Bashir, Usayd ibn Khudayr, 'Uwaym ibn Sa'idah, Ma'an ibn 'Adi, Abu-'Ubaydah ibn Al-Jarrah, Salim the manumitted slave of Abu-Hudhayfah, and Khalid ibn Al-Walid.

This group made great efforts in order to force the other people to pay allegiance. In this matter, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab was most active; he shouted and threatened the people to secure their allegiance. If one refrained, 'Umar would strike him with his stick on the head. He could hear the Ansar saying, 'You have beaten Sa'd.'

'Umar replied with fury and anger, 'Hit him! May Allah kill him, because he is a mischief-maker.'14

They almost killed Sa'd while he was ailing. They took him to his house while he was empty-handed and all his hopes were destroyed and dreams over.

When allegiance to Abu-Bakr was sworn, his supporters took him to the Prophet's Mosque as a bride carried to the bridal chamber 15 while the Holy Prophet's body was laid on his deathbed and

was yet to be buried. Meanwhile, Imam Ali (‘a) was busy in the funeral arrangements of burying the Holy Prophet’s dead body.

When Imam Ali (‘a) learnt about the allegiance to Abu-Bakr, he said this poetic verse to express his situation,

The people became involved in what they preferred and stood up in rebellion while Zayd was surrounded by a great calamity.[16]

Thus, Abu-Bakr was paid homage and appointed as the ruler of the Muslim community, while the Holy Prophet’s Household (‘a) were completely disregarded. None paid any attention to them. Since that day, all types of calamities and taunts confronted them; they were subjected to various tortures and calamites, including the carnage of Karbala' and all these events were rooted in that meeting of Saqifah and no elsewhere.

The Ansar were withdrawn from the political field; they lost all their prestige and power. Since that day, nothing more than disgrace and humiliation attacked them. They had to encounter various sorts of ordeals and calamities at the hands of many rulers and kings. In fact, that was the punishment for their having abandoned the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a).

In short, the Ansar were the first to open the door of persecution and assault against the Holy Prophet’s Household (‘a).

Celebration Of The People Of Quraysh

When Abu-Bakr held the position of leadership, the tribes of Quraysh could not hide their delight; they were overjoyed, since they considered it a great victory for themselves, because their hopes and aspirations became true.

Expressing this joy, Abu-’Abrah, a poet from Quraysh, composed these couplets:

Thanks to the One deserving Praise. The trouble was gone and allegiance given to the Siddiq (Abu-Bakr).

Then, the legs of Sa'd wavered after he had hoped that the furthest star would be within his reach.

Caliphate is for Quraysh and by the Lord of Muhammad, you (the Ansar) have no share in it. 17

These couplets talk about the delight of the people of Quraysh for winning caliphate, speak ill of the Ansar, and discuss their deprivation of this position.

Among those who expressed joy at Abu-Bakr's coming to power was 'Amr ibn Al-'As. At that time, he was not present in Al-Madinah, since he was on a journey. When he returned and knew about Abu-Bakr's holding the position of leadership, he remarked:

When you go to the Aws, tell them, and when you meet the Khazraj, say to them:

*You hoped to rule in Al-Madinah. But before it was cooked, the pot was taken off the fire.*18

Happiness and joy engulfed all the tribes of Quraysh and they began to support the rulership of Abu-Bakr. When the news of the Prophet's demise reached Makkah, they decided to announce their apostasy from Islam, but when they were further informed that Abu-Bakr became the ruler, they decided to remain in his obedience and expressed their happiness and pleasure at the turn of the events, since they got rid of both the Ansar and the Holy Prophet's Household ('a).

Imam Ali And The People Of Quraysh

On more than one occasion, Imam Ali ('a) invoked Almighty Allah's wrath and curse upon the people of Quraysh for their negative situations and animosity toward him.

On one occasion, Imam Ali ('a) prayed to Almighty Allah, saying,

O Allah, I beseech You to take revenge on the people of Quraysh and those who are assisting them, for they have cut as under my kinship, overturned my cup, and joined together to contest a right to which I was entitled more than anyone else. They said to me, 'If you get your right, that will be just; but if you are denied the right that too will be just.

Endure it with sadness or kill yourself in grief.' I looked around but found no one to shield me, protect me, or help me except the members of my family. I refrained from flinging them into death and therefore closed my eyes despite the dust, kept swallowing saliva despite the suffocation of grief, and endured pangs of anger although it was more bitter than colocynth and more grievous than the bite of knives. 19

On another occasion, Imam Ali ('a) said,

O Allah, I beseech You to be the enemy of the people of Quraysh along with me, because they had harbored various sorts of evil and betrayal against Your Messenger (S), but then failed to achieve any of them because it was You Who deterred them from achieving their evil plans.

Now, it has been my turn and my role to suffer their evil schemes. O Allah, please safeguard Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn and do not allow the sinful people of Quraysh to inflict any sort of damage on them as long as I am alive. When you decide to take me to You, then You are the watcher over them. You are witness over all things. 20

The Role Of Abu-Sufyan

First of all, Abu-Sufyan rose up against the power of Abu-Bakr; he therefore came to Imam Ali ('a) and encouraged him to rise up against Abu-Bakr and take back his usurped right of holding this

position, assuring that he would support him in this regard. He thus said, 'I see dust in the atmosphere and nothing except blood-shed will settle the dust.

O clan of Abd-Manaf, what Abu-Bakr has to do with your affair? Where are those two oppressed ones; namely, Ali and Al-'Abbas? Why should this matter be held by the lowliest clan of Quraysh?'

He then said to Imam Ali ('a), 'Stretch your hand so that I may pay homage to you. By Allah, if you wish, I can fill the land with cavalry and infantry.' He then cited these couplets of Al-Mutalammis, an Arab poet, as example:

None could remain established against whom destruction is intended except those two oppressed ones, the ass of the locality and the nail.

One of them shall be buried totally in the grave and the other shall be injured; and none shall weep for him.

He then added,

Thus, after dignity and strength, Quraysh has become submissive to the Taym[21] *without even striking of swords.*[22]

By this situation, Abu-Sufyan was neither sincere nor loyal to Imam Ali ('a), because he was the most vehement enemy of Islam and Muslims. However, the Imam ('a) was aware of his real intention. Thus, he did not give a positive reply and he refused the offer. He thus said to Abu-Sufyan in an angry tone,

By Allah, you intend nothing but mischief. By Allah, for ages you have wished ill for Islam and we are not in need for your advice'' [23]

Abu-Sufyan continued to create mischief and instigate Imam Ali ('a) to rise up against Abu-Bakr. He thus sang as follows:

O Descendants of Hashim, do not let them vie you, especially the family of Taym ibn Murrah or the clan of 'Adi.[24]

The affair (of leadership) is for none except you, none deserves it save you, and no one is superior to Abu'l-Hasan Ali.

O Abu'l-Hasan, have courage as you are most deserving of the work that is awaited.25

Confirmedly, the opposition of Abu-Sufyan to Abu-Bakr's authority was not based on faith in favor of Imam Ali ('a); rather, it was only a trick against Islam, since this man always waited for any opportunity to harm this religion. Imam Ali ('a) declined his offer and gave no importance to his false show of kindness, because Abu-Sufyan had already had a very good connection with Abu-Bakr.

Al-Bukhari narrates that Abu-Sufyan, once, passed by some Muslims among whom were Abu-Bakr, Salman, Suhayb, and Bilal. One of them said, 'Did the swords of Allah not smite the neck of this enemy of Allah?'

Abu-Bakr chastised them in harsh words, saying, 'Are you saying this about the chief and master of Quraysh?'

Then, Abu-Bakr hastened to the Holy Prophet (S) and told him what people had said about Abu-Sufyan. Answering him, the Prophet (S) said, 'O Abu- Bakr, maybe, you have displeased them. Even if you have not displeased them, then you have certainly displeased Allah.'26

This matter clearly shows the close mutual relationship between Abu-Bakr and Abu-Sufyan. Besides, during his reign, Abu-Bakr tried to win the sympathy and friendship of Abu-Sufyan. He appointed him as the governor of an area between Al-Hijaz and Najran.27

In the same way, he appointed his son Yazid as the governor of Syria, while he did not appoint any other Muslim personality as the governor of this sensitive region. From that moment, the for-

tunes of the Umayyad household began to rise and they could finally gain power.

Similarly, 'Umar had a very close relationship with Abu-Sufyan. In his own house, 'Umar dedicated a very well-decorated room to Abu-Sufyan and did not allow anyone else to enter it. When he was asked about the reason, 'Umar said, 'This is the chief of Quraysh.'[28]

Imam Ali's Attitude To The Pledge Of Allegiance To Abu-Bakr

Historicists and narrators have unanimously agreed that the reaction of Imam Ali ('a) to Abu-Bakr's holding the position of the next leadership of the Muslim community was characterized by at least displeasure and disapproval. The Imam ('a) did not have any doubt that he was more superior to all others for holding this position and that he was the most suitable for succession to the Holy Prophet (S).

First, Imam Ali ('a) was the closest in relation to the Holy Prophet (S). He possessed incomparable qualifications, capabilities, and ability to hold the responsibility of leadership. However, he did not think that these people would seize this position and take him out of it.

Taking the initiative, Al-'Abbas, Imam Ali's uncle, said to him, 'Son of my brother, extend your hand so that I will pay homage to you. If I do so, the people will say that the Holy Prophet's uncle has paid homage to the Holy Prophet's cousin; therefore, none will disagree to your leadership.'

Replying his uncle, Imam Ali ('a) said, *'Who else can demand this position?'*[29]

Commenting on this incident, Dr. Taha Husayn says,

When Al-'Abbas scrutinized the matter, he discovered that his nephew was more rightful to hold this position of leadership than he was, because the nephew was the foster son of the Holy Prophet (S), the most precedent in favor of Islam, and the unbeatable star of all situations. The Holy Prophet (S) used to call him as his brother.

One day, Ummu-Ayman jokingly said to the Holy Prophet (S), 'Do you call him (i.e. Ali) your brother and you have given him your daughter in marriage?' Besides, the Holy Prophet (S) said to him, 'Your position to me is exactly like the position of Prophet Aaron to Prophet Moses except that no prophet shall come after me.'

On another occasion, the Holy Prophet (S) said to the Muslims, ''Ali is now the master of whomever has regarded me as his master.' For all these reasons, Al- 'Abbas, immediately after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S), came to his nephew and said, 'Extend your hand so that I will pay homage to you' etc.' 30

At any rate, Imam Ali ('a) strictly opposed paying allegiance to Abu-Bakr and considered it a clear act of trespass against himself, because he knew for sure that the position of succession to the Holy Prophet (S) was his position alone, and with regard to caliphate, his position was *'like the pivot of the mill; such a lofty position that flood is unable to reach it and the birds also cannot scale those heights,'* as he himself described.

Imam Ali ('a) did not expect that this community would dare to distance themselves from the Holy Prophet's Household ('a). He, in an angry way, refused to pay homage to Abu-Bakr and openly announced his displeasure and shock at the trespassing of his rights and the injustices of those people in the matter of the next leadership, while those people did not pay any heed. This fact can obviously be noticed in Imam Ali's words and speeches recorded in *Nahj Al-Balaghah.*

Forcing Imam Ali To Pay Homage To Abu-Bakr

The ruling authorities decided to force Imam Ali (‘a) to pay allegiance to Abu-Bakr; they appointed some people to execute this matter. Headed by ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab who was shouting, threatening, and having in his hand a firebrand to set the house of the Divine Revelation on fire, some constables and mercenaries went to Imam Ali’s house, surrounded it, took out the Imam (‘a) forcibly in a disrespectful manner, and dragged him to Abu-Bakr.

The Holy Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' (‘a) the daughter of and most beloved to the Holy Prophet (S) came out and cried at ‘Umar, ‘What have you come with, son of Al-Khattab?’ Violently, ‘Umar answered, ‘What I have come with is more forceful than what your father had come with!’[31]

Finally, Imam Ali (‘a) was led out of his house violently and brought before Abu-Bakr. The party of Abu-Bakr shouted at him, ‘Pay homage to Abu- Bakr.’ The Imam (‘a) replied them in a very rational manner without being fearful of their might and force,

I am more qualified for this position than you are. I never pay homage to you; rather, you must pay homage to me. You have confiscated this affair (i.e. succession to the Holy Prophet) from the Ansar and argued against them on the basis of your proximity to the Prophet (S), while you have usurped it from us, the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a).

Did you not claim to the Ansar that you were more eligible than they were in this matter, because Muhammad (S) belonged to you in relative ties? They therefore surrendered the leadership to you and entrusted the command to you. Now, I present the same argument against you. We are the closest to the Prophet (S) in his lifetime and after his death. So, act justly towards us if you have faith; otherwise, you may continue in oppression while you know that it is wrong’’

By providing these brilliant arguments, Imam Ali (‘a) presented the same claim (namely, the closeness to the Holy Prophet) that the Muhajirun had used in their argumentation against the Ansar and could overcome them. In fact, the most qualified in the matter of the next leadership according to this claim was Imam Ali (‘a). He argued that he was the closest in relation to the Holy Prophet (S), because he was his cousin, son-in-law, and father of his two grandsons.

‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab, although he had no reply to the statement of the Imam (‘a), stood up from his place and spoke up angrily, ‘You shall not be released until you pay allegiance.’

‘What if I refuse?’ said Imam Ali (‘a).

‘Then, we will behead you!’ answered ‘Umar.

Imam Ali (‘a) looked around him and could not find any supporter to resort to; he therefore said in a sad tone, ‘*If you do, you will kill a servant of Allah and a brother of His Messenger.*’

Losing all his nerves, ‘Umar said, ‘Yes, you are a servant of Allah. But no, you are not the brother of His Messenger.’

Forgetting that Imam Ali (‘a) was always the brother of the Holy Prophet (S) and the door to his city of knowledge, ‘Umar turned to Abu-Bakr urging him to impose punishment on the Imam (‘a). He thus said, ‘Will you not make a decision against him?’

Abu-Bakr answered, ‘I cannot force him to do anything as long as Fatimah is to his side.’

The Imam (‘a) then gave ‘Umar a firm reply; he said, *‘Milk the udders and you will receive its gains; and make his position strong, for tomorrow shall it be returned to you.*’

Thus, Imam Ali (‘a) exposed the motive of ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab who had not expected such a harsh response from the Imam (‘a) who referred to the fact that leadership should reach him after

Abu-Bakr. At that time, the Imam (‘a) became furious and he screamed, *‘By Allah, O ‘Umar, I shall not listen to you and I shall not pay homage.’*

Abu-Bakr feared lest the situation would worsen; so, he glanced at the Imam (‘a) and said in the kindest manner, ‘If you do not pay homage, I will not force you to do.’

Abu-’Ubaydah, one of the most notorious supporters of Abu-Bakr, looked at the Imam (‘a) and, trying to cool the flames of re-volt and to make peace with him, said, ‘O cousin! You are still young while they are elders of the community. You do not posses the same experience and understanding they have.

I do not see Abu-Bakr but that, in this matter, he is stronger than you are. He has patience and ability to run the affairs of leader-ship. So, leave this matter for Abu-Bakr, because if you are alive, you shall one day be most qualified for this post from the aspects of superiority, faith, knowledge, understanding, precedence, and kinship’’

This deceptive and fraudulent manner aggrieved Imam Ali (‘a) more. He thus spoke to and preached the Muhajirun saying,

For the sake of Allah, O Muhajirun! Let the power of Muhammad (S) among the Arabs not be taken away from its abode and center. Do not distance the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) from their rights among the people and their actual position’ By Allah, O Muhajirun! We are the worthiest of all people of this position, because we are the Prophet’s Household, and in this matter, we are more qualified than you are.

We, the Ahl Al-Bayt, were always the best reciters of the Book of Allah, the most versed in the laws of the religion of Allah, the most knowledge-able of the traditions of Allah’s Messenger, the most conversant with the affairs of the subjects, their best defenders against all harmful things, and the distributors among them with equity.

By Allah, this matter is exclusively ours. So, do not follow the selfish desires, lest you will stray off from the path of Allah and you shall then increasingly deviate from the truth. 32

The previous words of Imam Ali (‘a) preview the qualifications of leadership that the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) other than anyone else enjoyed, such as familiarity with the laws of the religion, knowledgeability of the Holy Prophet’s traditions, and assuming the affairs of the subjects fairly and competently, as well as other qualifications that must be enjoyed by one who assumes the position of leading the Muslim community. In fact, these qualifications were enjoyed by the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) alone.

If the people had replied positively to the call of the Imam (‘a), it would have been a guarantee for their wellbeing and protection from deviation and going astray in the field of faith and other fields. The Imam (‘a) would also have saved the nation from many evil consequences. Alas! Since a long time people went towards greed and fulfillment of selfish desires and sacrificed everything for this.

Anyway, the people did not pay any heed to the Imam’s logic; they considered their material gains superior over everything else.

Strict Protestations

The family members of the Holy Prophet (S) and other prominent personalities of Islam refused to pay homage to Abu-Bakr, demonstrating overwhelming points of protest all of which confirmed that the Holy Prophet’s Household (‘a) were the worthiest of succeeding him. Let us now present some of these protestations:

Imam Ali’s Protestations

Trying to gain Imam Ali's satisfaction and to give legal touches to his leadership that he had usurped from their true people, Abu-Bakr said to Imam Ali ('a), 'Abu'l-Hasan! By Allah, I had nothing to do in this matter and I did not have any desire for holding this position, since I never cared for the matter, never had enough self-confidence to know what is required by the community, never had sufficient financial power, never depended upon my lowly clan, and never wanted to hold this position in order to prevent others from reaching it.

Now, why are you hiding in yourself what I do not deserve from you, showing hatred to me, and looking at me with the eye of animosity?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

If so, what has made you accept this position when you did not have desire for it, nor did you care for it, nor did you have enough self-confidence to assume it?

Abu-Bakr said, 'What has made me accept it is a tradition that I have heard from Allah's Messenger who said, 'Verily, Allah does not accept that my nation concur in deviation.' Hence, when I noticed the concurrence of them, I followed the Prophet's saying and feared lest their concurrence would be in violation of true guidance.

Therefore, I gave them my consent. If I had known that one person only did not agree, I would certainly have refrained from holding this position.'

The second question of the Imam ('a) was the following:

As regarding the Holy Prophet's words that you have just mentioned, now, am I one of this community or not?

'Yes, you are,' answered Abu-Bakr.

The Imam ('a) added,

What about the group who refrained from paying homage to you, such as Salman, 'Ammar, Abu-Dharr, Al-Miqdad, and the Ansar? How can you provide as evidence the saying of the Prophet (S) when the like of these persons did not pay homage to you? In fact, there is no objection to these persons at all and they have never shown any negligence with regard to their companionship of the Prophet (S)?

Abu-Bakr answered, 'Only after the concluding of the matter (of caliphate) did I know about the refusal of these people. I then feared lest people would abandon the faith if I would retreat. Hence, my response to their request was, in my conception, less harmful to the religion; lest, people would kill each other and then return to atheism. I also knew that you would not be less careful for keeping the faith of these people than I would be.'

The Imam ('a) then said to Abu-Bakr,

Can you answer me what qualifications should be enjoyed so that one will be worth holding this position?

Abu-Bakr began to enumerate such qualifications like sincerity, loyalty, strictness, good behavior, establishment of justice, acting upon the Holy Book and the Prophetic traditions, eloquence, abstinence from worldly pleasures, and regaining the dues from their usurpers, no matter who they are.

Imam Ali ('a), adding to these qualifications, said,

What about precedence in the service of the religion and kinship with the Holy Prophet? I adjure you by Allah, O Abu-Bakr! Do you find yourself enjoying these qualifications?

Abu-Bakr answered, 'In fact, it is you who enjoy these qualification, O Abu'l-Hasan.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I the first male to respond to the call of the Holy Prophet (S) to this religion?

'It was you,' Abu-Bakr answered. Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I who conveyed the contents of Surah Bara'ah to the pilgrims and the great gathering of the community?

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I who sacrificed his life for Allah's Messenger (S) on the day of the cave?

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.' Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I the loyalty to whom was joined to the loyalty to Allah and His Messenger in the (Quranic) verse that was revealed to express my giving my ring as alms?

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it your or my wife and sons whom Allah's Messenger (S) took with him to imprecate Allah's curse on the polytheist party?

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I who was granted succession to the Holy Prophet (S) and whose position to the Holy Prophet (S) was exactly like the position of Prophet Aaron to Prophet Moses?

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you and your family or I and my family about whom the (Quranic) Verse of Purification from filth was revealed?

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you and your family.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I, my wife, and my children for whom the Holy Prophet (S) said this prayer on the day when we were gathered by him under the cloak: 'O Allah, these are my family members. O Allah, please make them return to You, but not to Hellfire?' 33

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you, your wife, and your children.'
Imam Ali ('a) further asked,
I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I about whom this (Quranic) verse was revealed:

'They fulfill vows and fear a day the evil of which shall be spreading far and wide (76:7)?'

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I to whom the sun was returned to the time of his prayer and thus he performed that prayer in its time; and the sun set again afterward? 34

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I the hero about whom a call from the heavens shouted: 'There is no sword but Dhu'l-Faqar and there is no hero but Ali?'

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I whom was endued by the Holy Prophet (S) with his standard on the day of the conquest of Khaybar; therefore, Almighty Allah granted him victory on that day?

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I who relieved the Messenger of Allah (S) and the Muslims when he killed 'Amr ibn Abd-Wudd?

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I whom Allah purified against illegitimate birth since Adam up to his direct father; hence, Allah's Messenger (S) said, 'You (Ali) and I were born from legal, but never illegitimate, marriages since Adam up to Abd Al-Muttalib?' 35

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I whom the Holy Prophet (S) chose and gave his daughter Fatimah in marriage, saying, 'It is Allah Who has given her in marriage to you (Ali) in the heavens?'

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; is it you or I the father of Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, the two grandsons and basils of the Messenger of Allah (S) who said about them, 'These two are the chiefs of the youths of Paradise, and their father is even more preferred than they are?'

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It is you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; is it your or my brother who is decorated with two wings by which he flies with the angels in Paradise?

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It is your brother.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I who guaranteed the debts of Allah's Messenger (S) and declared openly in the season of the Hajj pilgrimage the fulfillment of his promises? 36

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I whom was invited by Allah's Messenger (S) to join him in eating the roasted bird when he prayed Almighty Allah, saying, 'O Allah, please bring to me the dearest of Your creatures to You and to me to eat with me this bird.' So, none came except me? 37

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I to whom the Messenger of Allah (S) gave the good tidings that he would fight the breakers of their pledges, the wrongdoers, and the apostates for the sake of the accurate interpretation of the Quran? 38

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I to whose full acquaintance with judicature and fair judgment the Messenger of Allah (S) referred by saying, ''Ali is the most knowledgeable of judicature amongst you all?' 39

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali (‘a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I whom the Messenger of Allah (S) ordered to be greeted as the leader of the believers during his lifetime? 40

Abu-Bakr answered, ‘It was you.’

Imam Ali (‘a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I who witnessed the last words of Allah’s Messenger (S), undertook the ritual ablution of his body, and buried him? 41

Abu-Bakr answered, ‘It was you.’Imam Ali (‘a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I the closest to the Messenger of Allah (S)? 42

Abu-Bakr answered, ‘It was you.’

Imam Ali (‘a) further asked, I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I whom Allah endued with a dinar 43 *when he was in urgent need for it, Gabriel sold him what he had needed, and Muhammad (S) was his guest when he served his sons with food?* 44

Abu-Bakr answered, ‘It was you.’

Imam Ali (‘a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I whom the Messenger of Allah (S) carried on his shoulder to throw and break the idol that was put on the roof of the Ka’bah that if I, on that day, wanted to catch the horizon of the heavens, I could?

Abu-Bakr answered, ‘It was you.’

Imam Ali (‘a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I to whom the Messenger of Allah (S) said, ‘You are the bearer of my standard in this world and the other

world?' 45

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

*I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I whom the Messenger of Allah (S) ordered to open the door of his house in his mosque when he ordered all the other doors to be closed, including all his relatives and companions, and permitted you to do whatever Allah has permitted in the mosque?*46
Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I who alone gave in charity before consultation with Allah's Messenger (S) and thus could consult with him, when Almighty Allah blamed some people saying,

'Do you fear that you will not be able to give in charity before your consultation? So, when you do not do it and Allah has turned to you mercifully, then keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and obey Allah and His Messenger; and Allah is Aware of what you do (58:13)?' 47

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah; was it you or I about whom the Messenger of Allah (S) said to Fatimah , 'I have given you in marriage to the foremost of all people in believing and the best of all Muslims' etc?'

Abu-Bakr answered, 'It was you.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

I adjure you by Allah, O Abu-Bakr; was it you or I whom was greeted by the angels of seven skies on that day at Spring Badr? 48

These overwhelming arguments silenced Abu-Bakr and locked in his face all ways out. So, he had to respond to Imam Ali (‘a) and he was determined to correct his mistake, but ‘Umar deterred him.[49]

Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra''S Protestation

In her protestation against Abu-Bakr and his group, Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' (‘a) provided overwhelming points of protestation, proving Imam Ali’s priority to hold the position of the next leadership. She also denounced the people for eliminating Imam Ali (‘a) from this position, threatening that they would certainly encounter bad consequences, as a result of this situation of them. She thus said,

Woe unto them! Whereto did they move it from the position of the mission, the bases of Prophethood and the place of descent of Gabriel the Honest Spirit? Verily, he (i.e. Imam Ali) is aware of life and religion’s affairs. That was the great loss. What did they deny from Abu’l-Hasan (Ali)? Yes, by God! They denied the strikes of his sword, his carelessness about death, his deadly assaults, and his anger for the sake of Allah.

By Allah, if they turned away from the rein, which the Prophet had handed over to him (i.e. to Imam Ali), he would catch it tenderly and he would move without harm or worry. He would lead them to a fresh flowing fount and would return them with satiety while he himself would not profit of anything but a little just to break his acute thirst and hunger.

If they did so, they would be granted blessings from the Heaven and the earth and they would be rewarded by Allah according to their deeds. Come on to see! As long as you live, time shall show you wonders! I wish I knew on what proof they have relied, to what refuge they resorted and to what tie they clung, and on whose progeny have they encroached and spoke against!

Evil indeed is the patron, and evil indeed is the associate, and evil indeed is this change for the unjust! By Allah, they exchanged the good with the

bad and the daring with impotent. Disgrace be for a people, who think they do well. Surely they themselves are the mischief makers, but they do not perceive. Woe to them!

'Is he then who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or he who himself does not go aright unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you; how do you judge?(10:35)'

By Allah, it was impregnated; so, wait until it bears then milk pure blood and fatal venom to the full of the bucket! Then they will perish who say false things and the successors will know what bad the earlier ones have established. Then, be at ease and wait slowly for the sedition.

Rejoice at a sharp sword, an assault of a tyrant enemy, general commotion, and despotism, which will make your victuals so insignificant and your gathering separate. Alas, what a pity! *How will you be while it has been obscured to your sights? Shall we then force you to accept it when you are averse to it?* 50

Lights On Lady Fatimah's Speech

In her speech, Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a) condemned the paying of homage to Abu-Bakr, declaring such homage as alienation from the Holy Prophet's Household ('a). Referring to the reasons for which these people turned away from giving Imam Ali ('a) his right to hold the position of leadership after the Holy Prophet (S), Lady Fatimah ('a) pointed out some peculiar characteristics of Imam Ali ('a), as follows

1. The Imam's sword harvested the heads of the chiefs of Quraysh and thus created in their hearts malice and hatred towards him.

2. The Imam ('a) never flattered anybody at the expense of the truth. He never cared for any blame or criticism as long as he followed the truth.

3. The Imam ('a) dedicated his entire life to pleasing Almighty Allah; he therefore did not take into consideration any point other

than the pleasure of Almighty Allah, even if the other party was a close relative.

Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a) then exposed some features of Imam Ali's government if only he had held his natural position of leading the Muslim community. Some of these features are as follows:

A) Imam Ali ('a) would govern their affairs with thorough justice and would rule according to the laws of Almighty Allah.

B) He would lead them to a luxurious life, security, and peace.

C) He would act sincerely towards them and guide them to the best of all affairs.

D) He would refuse to benefit from any worldly pleasure and to take for himself the least amount of their financial dues.

In fact, when power came to Imam Ali ('a), he lived as simply as possible; he had no more than one garment and ate no more than one simple meal. He lived the life of the most miserable citizens. In this respect, he is reported to have said,

Shall I be content with being called Amir Al-Mu'minin (The Leader of the Believers), although I do not share with the people the hardships of the world? Or shall I be an example for them in the distresses of life? I have not been created to keep myself busy in eating good foods like the tied animal whose only worry is his fodder or like a loose animal whose activity is to swallow. It fills its belly with its feed and forgets the purpose behind it. Shall I be left uncontrolled to pasture freely, or draw the rope of misguidance or roam aimlessly in the paths of bewilderment? 51

E) The fortunes and blessings of Almighty Allah would have covered the entire globe and people would have found no hunger and no destitution if Imam Ali ('a) had been allowed to hold his natural position of succeeding the Holy Prophet (S) in leading the Muslim community. Unfortunately, the Muslims deprived them-

selves of all these fortunes and brought upon themselves persecution and discrepancy.

Finally, Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' (‘a) predicted that the Muslim community would suffer very much and encounter various sorts of ordeals and hardships as a result of their eliminating Imam Ali (‘a) from leadership. She thus foretold that seditious matters would blacken the atmospheres of the Muslim community thus disuniting them, the ruling authorities would act towards them tyrannically, and the wrongdoers would manage them dictatorially.

In fact, all these predictions came true, especially after Mu’awiyah came to power. He tortured and exhausted the Muslims, gave a free hand to such criminals like Samarah ibn Jundub, Al-Mughirah ibn Shu’bah, Ziyad ibn Abih, and Busr ibn Arta'ah to persecute the people.

In the reign of Mu’awiyah, fear spread, people were sentenced to various sorts of punishment, many eyes were gouged out, many bodies were crucified on the trunks of date-palm trees, and many hearts were pulled out.

More terribly, when Yazid came to power, horrible crimes were committed; he massacred the Holy Prophet’s family, attacked Al-Madinah and violated its people’s sanctities, and demolished and destroyed by fire the Holy Ka’bah.

All these and more were the result of eliminating Imam Ali (‘a) from the position of leadership.

Imam Al-Hasan’s Protestation

When Abu-Bakr usurped the position of leadership, Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) was only seven years old. He went to the mosque of his grandfather and found Abu-Bakr on the minbar. He thus said to him,

Come down from the minbar of my father and go to your father's minbar.

Astounded by Imam Al-Hasan's words, Abu-Bakr had to answer with a soft word, saying, 'You are right! By Allah, it is your father's minbar, but not my father's.'[52]

Salman Al-Muhammadi's Protestation

Salman Al-Farisi (the Persian) was one of the most prominent companions of the Holy Prophet (S). He had full knowledge with Islam, its laws, and its principles. The Holy Prophet (S) cared for him very much that he attached him to his family members, saying,

Salman is one of us-the Ahl Al-Bayt.

He (S) also instructed,

Do not say: Salman Al-Farisi (i.e. of Persia); rather, you should say: Salman Al-Muhammadi (i.e. of Muhammad).

When Salman saw how leadership was dissociated from the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), he condemned Abu-Bakr, saying,

O Abu-Bakr, to whom will you refer your issue when something you ignore befalls you? To whom will you resort when you are asked a question whose answer is not known by you?

What is your excuse as you have advanced yourself to the one who is more knowledgeable than you are, closer to the Messenger of Allah (S) than you are, more familiar with the Book of Allah and the Prophet's traditions than you are, and whom was put first by the Holy Prophet (S) during his lifetime and whom the Prophet (S) instructed you all to follow at the hour of his death?

However, you abandoned the Prophet's instruction, pretended to have forgotten his will, breached your promise, broke the

covenant, and released yourselves from the bond under which the Prophet (S) put you when you refused to join Usamah's expedition? 53

'Ammar Ibn Yasir's Protestation

One of the contributors to the construction of the edifice of Islam and one of those whom were harshly persecuted for the sake of Allah, 'Ammar ibn Yasir enjoyed a highly considerable standing with the Holy Prophet (S).

When Abu-Bakr gained caliphate, 'Ammar hurried to condemn him and the people of Quraysh as well, saying,

O groups of Quraysh! O groups of Muslims! If you do not know so far, then be it known to you that the Household of your Prophet (S) is the closest to him, the most rightful to receive his inheritance, the most proficient to run the affairs of the religion, the best protectors of the faithful believers, the best guardians of this nation, and the most sincere to this community.

So, order your acquaintance (i.e. Abu-Bakr) to give back the right to its people before your rope shivers, your situation grows weaker, disunity emerges amongst you, sedition invades you forcibly, discrepancy appears amongst you, and your enemy seizes the best opportunity to do violence to you.

You have already known that the Banu-Hashim are nearer to this affair than you are and Ali is the closest of you all to your Prophet (S). Unlike all of you, Ali is your leader by the binding command of Allah and His Messenger. He is manifestly different from you all as proven by many cases, especially when the Prophet (S) closed your doors (to the mosque) and kept Ali's door open, when he gave him in marriage his daughter Fatimah as a sign of Ali's superiority to all of you.

Besides, the Prophet (S) said about Ali, **"I am the city of wisdom, and Ali is its door"**. So, whoever wants wisdom must come to it from its door.' Verily, all of you are obliged to resort to him whenever you face a problem with regard to your religious affairs, while he can dispense with you all in this regard, because he enjoys such unprecedented peculiarities that even the best of you lack.

Why do you now depart from him? Why do you usurp his right? Why do you prefer this world to the other world? Evil is this change for the unjust people. Give him what Allah has decided to be for him exclusively. Do not turn back from him retreatingly. Do not turn you back upon your heels; so, you will turn back losers.[54]

Abu-Dharr's Protestation

Abu-Dharr is the voice of justice and truth in Islam. He comprehended the teachings and laws of the religion that are purposed for spreading social justice on the earth.

Expressing his anger with those who eliminated Imam Ali ('a) from caliphate, Abu-Dharr addressed these words to the groups of the people of Quraysh and the Ansar:

O group of the Muhajirun and the Ansar, you and the good ones amongst you all know well that the Holy Prophet (S) had said, 'The rule over the affairs belongs to Ali after me. After him, it belongs to Al-Hasan and Al- Husayn. After them, it belongs to the members of my Household from the progeny of Al-Husayn.'

However, you have ignored Your Prophet's words and tried to forget what he had ordered you to follow. You have thus followed the worldly pleasures and forsaken the blessings of the other world whose construction will never be destroyed, bliss will never vanish, people will never be sad, and inhabitants will never die.

You have become just like the deviated nations who changed the orders of their prophets after them. Soon will you be bitterly punished for your deeds. Allah never oppresses His servants.'55

Al-Miqdad's Protestation

Al-Miqdad was one of the prominent personalities in Islam and one of the most sincere companions of Imam Ali ('a). Reproaching Abu-Bakr, he said,

O Abu-Bakr, retreat from your wrongdoing, repent to your Lord, and give back the leadership to its real owner who has more priority to hold this position than you do. You have already known about the allegiance to him that the Holy Prophet (S) had bound you with, ordered you to be a soldier under the standard of Usamah ibn Zayd, and confirmed the illegality of you and your supporters to hold this position when he attached you to the head of hypocrisy and the essence of enmity and rebellion; namely, 'Amr ibn Al-'As about whom Almighty Allah revealed to His Prophet this verse:

'Surely, your enemy is the one who shall be without posterity.'(108:3)

So, fear Allah and hurry to resign this position before it is too late. This is in fact safer for you in your lifetime and after your death. Do not incline to the worldly pleasures and do not be deceived by the people of Quraysh and other people. Very soon shall your worldly pleasures knock you down and you will be returned to your Lord Who will then punish you for what you have done.

You know for sure that Ali ibn Abi Talib is the successor to the Holy Prophet (S); therefore, give him what Allah has decided for him. If you do, this will cover up your defects and lighten your overloads. By Allah, I am but an advisor for you if you only accept my advice. All affairs shall be eventually returned to Allah.56

‘Utbah Ibn Abi-Lahab’s Protestation

In a form of poetic verses, ‘Utbah ibn Abi-Lahab reproached Abu-Bakr for usurping caliphate, saying,

I never expected that this affair (of caliphate) would be turned away From the descendant of Hashim in general and from Abu’l-Hasan in particular.

Has he not been the first to believe, the first to serve Islam, and the most knowledgeable in the Quran and the Prophetic traditions?

He is also the last to witness the Prophet and the one whom was assisted by Gabriel in washing and enshrouding the Prophet.

He enjoys such virtuous traits that none of you has their likes and no one among these people ever had his righteous features. 57

Abu-Ayyub Al-Ansari’s Protestation

One of the most brilliant companions of Imam Ali (‘a), Abu-Ayyub participated in all of Imam Ali’s expeditions and battles. He believed in the Imam’s superiority over all others to hold the position of leadership after the Holy Prophet (S). 58

Admonishing Abu-Bakr for usurping Imam Ali’s right, Abu-Ayyub said,

O servants of Allah, fear Allah as regards the household of your Prophet and give them back their right that Allah has decided for them. You, as well as all our brothers, have heard the Holy Prophet (S) on many occasions and in many situations repeating these words: ‘Your leaders after me are the members of my household.’

Referring to none but Ali, the Prophet (S) also said, ‘This (Ali) is the leader of the pious ones and the slayer of the atheists. Really disappointed is he who disappoints him and really victorious is

he who supports him.' So, repent to Allah from your wrongdoing to him, for Allah accepts repentance and He is All-merciful.

Do not turn back against him, refusing him. 59

Ubayy Ibn Ka'b's Protestation

Ubayy ibn Ka'b, one of the Ansar, is the chief of the reciters of the Holy Quran and one of those who swore allegiance to the Holy Prophet (S). He participated in all of the Holy Prophet's expeditions. 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab used to call Ubayy as the chief of Muslims.

Condemning Abu-Bakr for usurping caliphate from Imam Ali ('a), Ubayy said,

O Abu-Bakr, do not deny the right that Allah has decided for one other than you and do not be the first to disobey Allah's Messenger with regard to his successor and most elite person, as you are challenging his command. Give back the right to its people so that you will be safe.

Do not go too far in your error, lest you will be sorry. Hurry to return to the truth so that your sin will be eased. Do not have exclusive control over this matter, which Allah has not decided for you; lest, you will encounter the bad consequence of your deed. Very soon, you will depart from what you are now enjoying and come to meet your Lord Who shall interrogate you about what you have done. Verily, your Lord does not oppress His servants.60

Al-Nu'man Ibn 'Ajlan's Protestation

The spokesman and poet of the Ansar, Al-Nu'man ibn 'Ajlan composed some poetic verses, criticizing Abu-Bakr for holding the position of caliphate, which is the right of Ali ibn Abi Talib('a). He thus said,

You deemed it illegal to appoint Sa'd as the caliph! Is it then legal to appoint Abu-Bakr for this position?
Do you think that Abu-Bakr is worthy enough to be the leader; while it is well known that Ali is the worthiest?
Verily, it is catastrophic not to give this office to Ali, who deserves it more than everyone else, whether you know this or not. 61

'Uthman Ibn Hunayf's Protestation

Addressing Abu-Bakr, 'Uthman ibn Hunayf said,

*We have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, 'My Household are the stars of the earth. So, do not advance yourselves against them. They are verily the leaders after me.' Immediately, a man stood up and asked, 'O Allah's Messenger, who are those representing your household?' The Holy Prophet (S) answered, 'They are Ali and his immaculate sons.'*62

Sahl Ibn Hunayf's Protestation

Declaring his support to Imam Ali ('a) and addressing the people of Quraysh, Sahl ibn Hunayf, one of the most virtuous Companions, said,

O people of Quraysh, bear witness that I saw the Messenger of Allah (S) in this very place (i.e. the Prophet's Mosque) taking Ali ibn Abi Talib from the hand and saying, 'O people, this (Ali) is your leader after me and my successor in my lifetime and after my death. He settles my debts and fulfills my promises. He will be the first to shake hands with me on my Divine Pond. So, joy is for him who follows and supports Ali, but woe is him who lags behind and disappoints him.' 63

Khuzaymah Ibn Thabit's Protestation

Khuzaymah ibn Thabit was one of the most brilliant, most trustful, and closest Companions to the Holy Prophet (S). His testi-

mony was equal to two testimonies, because of his ultimate truthfulness. Declaring his support of Imam Ali ('a), he said,

O people, do you not know that the Messenger of Allah (S) admitted my testimony without need for anyone else's testimony? I thus testify that I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, *'The members of my Household distinguish between the right and the wrong. They are the leaders that must be followed.'* I have testified to what I had already known. A mission of a messenger is no more than conveying the message plainly.64

Abu'l-Haytham Ibn Al-Tayhan's Protestation

Professing that Imam Ali ('a) deserved the position of caliphate more than anyone else did, Abu'l-Haytham said,

I bear witness that our Prophet (S), on the day at Ghadir Khumm, declared Ali as the next leader. The Ansar on that occasion said, 'He has declared him as his successor.' Others said, 'He has declared Ali as the master of whomever has considered the Prophet (S) as his master.'

When different opinions were said about that incident, we sent one of us to the Holy Prophet (S) to ask him about that. The Holy Prophet (S) said, *'Tell people that Ali is the master of the faithful believers after me and the most sincere with regard to leading my community.'*

I have thus testified to what I personally had witnessed. So, let him who pleases believe, and let him who pleases disbelieve. Verily, the Day of Discrimination is a day pre-appointed.65

In brief, the events that took place under that shed (i.e. Saqifah of Banu- Sa'idah) were the first seed in sowing discrepancy among Muslims and inconsistency of their word. These events were the source of the major sedition in which all Muslims have been engaged all over history.

Unfortunate steps

The government of Abu-Bakr decided that dreadful steps should be taken against the Imam (‘a) and all efforts be concentrated to weaken and suppress him in every way, because Imam Ali (‘a) was the head of opposition to the government and the absolute majority were inclined towards that the Imam might take the reins of government in his hands. Here we shall discuss some steps that the government of Abu-Bakr initiated.

Attacking Imam Ali’s House

When Imam Ali (‘a) refused openly to pay homage to Abu-Bakr and provided overwhelming points of protestation all of which proved that he was more entitled to this position than anyone else, because Imam Ali (‘a), at least, was the Holy Prophet’s brother, son-in-law, and father of his grandsons, as well as the one whose struggle for Islam cannot be compared to anyone else’s struggle, the major companions of the Holy Prophet (S) joined him in this respect.

Imam Ali (‘a) and these companions held a meeting in his house. When Abu-Bakr was informed about this, he felt extremely upset. He thus decided to raid on Imam Ali’s house and use all means of violence. So, he ordered ‘Umar to raid on the Imam’s house suddenly and take him out by force to pay homage in the mosque.

Carrying out this order, ‘Umar, carrying a firebrand in the hand, led his policemen and soldiers who carried firewood with them and hurried to the Imam’s house. They would not hesitate to set the house of the Divine Revelation on fire and to burn those people from whom Allah removed filth.

With furious manner and loud voice, ‘Umar shouted, ‘I swear by him who holds ‘Umar’s soul in his hand; if you refuse to come out, I will set this house on fire with all those who are therein.’

A group of people reproached him and warned him against Allah’s punishment, saying, ‘Fatimah is in this house!’

These people intended to remind 'Umar of the Holy Prophet's words to his daughter Fatimah, **'Verily, Allah is pleased when you are pleased, and is angry when you are angered.'**

However, 'Umar paid no attention as he answered, 'Even so! Even so!'

The Holy Lady Fatimah ('a) went out and said to them, 'As much as I know, there is no people worse than you are in such a situation. You have left the dead body of Allah's Messenger between our hands and gone to decide your own affair! You neither asked for our opinion nor gave back our right to us.'

These words affected the menTalibties of these people, but 'Umar went back hurriedly to Abu-Bakr and urged him to take more violent procedures, saying, 'Will you not take homage from this one who refuses to pay homage to you?'

Responding to 'Umar's suggestion, Abu-Bakr sent Qunfudh, an evil and coarse slave, with a group of policemen to break into Imam Ali's house. They then took out the Imam ('a) tied with his sword's rope. Following him, Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a) went out, crying on her father, seeking his aid, and saying, *'O my father! O Allah's Messenger! See what we are suffering from the son of Al-Khattab and the son of Abu-Quhafah!'*

Astounded, people gathered near the house of Imam Ali ('a) and others began to weep for the scene. Nevertheless, 'Umar and his gang were not touched by Lady Al-Zahra''s cries; rather, they led the Imam ('a) towards Abu-Bakr who said to him, 'Pay homage! Pay homage!'

'If I do not do it, what will you do?' answered Imam Ali ('a).

Misled by their personal instincts, some present people shouted, 'If you do it not, we will behead you. We swear it by Allah!'

However, the ruling authorities had to release Imam Ali (‘a) who, without delay, hurried towards the burial place of his brother the Messenger of Allah (S), complaining about the ordeals and hardships he was facing, and repeating this holy verse while weeping,

‘Son of my mother! Surely, the people reckoned me weak and had well-nigh slain me.’

The issue of Fadak

Historicists and narrators have reported that when the Muslim armies conquered the fortresses of Khaybar, Almighty Allah cast horror and panic in the hearts of the people of Fadak who hurried to the Holy Prophet (S) and obeyed all of his orders. So, the Holy Prophet (S) concluded with them a truce according to which he would take half of their lands. Hence, these lands were pure possession of the Holy Prophet (S) personally, because Muslims did not occupy these lands militarily.

Fadak was thus a personal property of the Holy Prophet (S). When this verse:

‘And give to the near of kin his due, (17:26)’

was revealed, he transferred its ownership to Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra’ (‘a) through a document. The land was in the possession and use of Lady Fatimah (‘a) until the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S). When Abu-Bakr assumed power, he evicted her from the possession of the land and the garden thereon. This procedure of confiscation was intended to deprive Imam Ali (‘a) of any financial power due to which he might demand with his right, which was usurped by Abu-Bakr.

She went into appeal against this action and provided Imam Ali (‘a) and Ummu-Ayman as her witnesses. They both gave evidence that Lady Fatimah (‘a) was right in her claim that the Holy Prophet (S), in his lifetime, had endued her with the property of

Fadak as gift in her favor. Abu-Bakr rejected the claim saying, 'O daughter of the Prophet! The evidence is not complete unless there are two male witnesses or one man and two female witnesses!'

Lady Fatimah ('a), seeing that the evidence of Imam Ali ('a) and Ummu- Ayman was deemed incomplete and the gift of the garden of Fadak was rendered invalid, claimed it as an inheritance from her father the Holy Prophet (S). The contention was that if Abu-Bakr did not consider it as donation, he should concede it to her as an inheritance from her father.

Abu-Bakr said that the properties of the Holy Prophet (S) are not to be transferred to his offspring as inheritance because he (S) had said, 'We, the group of prophets, do not leave any inheritance; our assets are alms.'

Lady Fatimah ('a) rejoined, 'Is it written in the Book of Allah that you receive your father's inheritance and I do not? Has the Prophet (S) not said that the right of a person is that his offspring are protected?'66

Lady Fatimah ('a) was so upset with the verdict of Abu-Bakr that she stopped talking to him and was cross with him the rest of her lifetime. This attitude was not a momentary thing. The person, Fatimah ('a), whose truthfulness and veracity the Prophet (S) established and proved on the day of Mubahalah (the mutual imprecation of God's curse on the lying party) was suspected of making a false claim by Abu-Bakr.

Al-Bukhari writes, 'Fatimah ('a), after her father's demise, claimed from Abu- Bakr that the property that the Prophet (S) acquired from the infidels without battling, and had left behind as inheritance, was her right and thus should be given to her. Abu-Bakr said, 'Allah's Messenger (S) has observed that the prophets do not give any inheritance. Whatever they leave behind is charity'. Fatimah ('a) was very angry at this and severed all contact with Abu-Bakr until her demise.'67

If we presume that neither a donation was made of Fadak nor it was an inheritance, what was the problem in Abu-Bakr giving away the land to Fatimah (‘a) considering her nearness to the Prophet (S). It is considered a right and the duty of a ruler that he can give anything to anyone at his discretion!

Therefore, Abu-Bakr gave to Al-Zubayr ibn Al-’Awwam a property in the valley of Al-Jurf and ‘Umar too transferred to him a property in the valley of ‘Aqiq. ‘Uthman gave away Fadak to Marwan during his reign. Why did not Abu-Bakr give the garden of Fadak to Fatimah (‘a) in the same manner? Fatimah (‘a) was certainly angry with Abu-Bakr and the gravity of this anger can be judged from what the Prophet (S) himself had said,

O Fatimah! Allah is angry when you are angry and happy when you are happy.

It surprises one as to what rule was followed when the claim of Fatimah (‘a) was turned down. The Prophet (S) had given her the possession of the land, and he made the document of donation. If the possession was not there, Abu- Bakr could have said that since she was not in possession of the land, the donation was incomplete. Since possession is the proof of ownership, the burden of proof was on Abu-Bakr to establish that the donation was wrong.

There was no need for him to ask her to produce witnesses. Could anyone have doubted that Fatimah (‘a) would tell falsehoods just to keep possession of Fadak and make a claim over something that did not belong to her? Her truthfulness is an established fact and the certificate is issued by no less a person than ‘A’ishah, ‘I have not found anyone other than Fatimah’s father more truthful than Fatimah.’[68]

When Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra’ (‘a) presented the witnesses, Abu-Bakr said that the evidence was incomplete. The contention was wrong because the Prophet (S) in his time had decided cases on the basis of the evidence of even a single witness. If Abu-Bakr had wanted, he could have decided in favor of Fatimah (‘a) by taking

an oath from Imam Ali (‘a) that the Prophet (S) had given the land of Fadak as gift to her.

In the books of traditions, there are several cases where even the need for a witness was not considered for arriving at a decision considering the personal status of the claimant. In some cases, they accepted the evidence of one witness only. When the sons of Suhayb went to the court of Marwan claiming that the Prophet (S) had given two houses and a room to Suhayb, they were asked to produce their witness.

They said, ‘’Abdullah ibn ‘Umar will bear witness for us.’ Thus, Abdullah ibn ‘Umar was called to the court and he witnessed that the Prophet (S) had given to Suhayb two houses and a room. Marwan gave a verdict in their favor on the basis of the evidence of Abdullah.’69

At that time, neither Abdullah ibn ‘Umar’s evidence was deemed incomplete nor was there any delay in accepting it. Was Imam Ali (‘a) not even of the status of Abdullah ibn ‘Umar that his evidence was not accepted. On Abdullah ibn ‘Umar, there was a remark that he had owed allegiance to the evil Yazid ibn Mu’awiyah.

Those who bore witness in the matter of Fadak were known for their nobility and strength of character. Therefore, Al- Ma’mun, the ‘Abbasid ruler, once asked the scholars their opinion about those who bore witness about the gift of the land of Fadak. All of them said that they were truthful and straightforward. When the scholars unanimously agreed about their truthfulness, Al-Ma’mun gave Fadak to the progeny of Fatimah (‘a) and gave them a certificate to the effect.70

There was no justification of even rejecting the claim of Lady Fatimah (‘a) to the inheritance left by her father the Prophet (S). The tradition that Abu-Bakr quoted in support of his claim is quite contrary to the command of the Holy Quran that says,

And to every one We have appointed heirs of what parents and near relatives leave. (4:33)

When this holy Quranic verse is there, there is no justification in terming the Prophet's inheritance as alms and depriving his daughter of the ownership of the land. If it had been alms, then the Prophet (S) would have immediately distributed it amongst the poor and needy as soon as it came in his possession.

Of course, the Holy Prophet (S) used to distribute the produce of the land to the poor and needy. But this does not mean that he had forfeited the ownership of the property. Instead of seeking shelter behind the tradition of 'we, the Prophets, do not leave inheritances,' Abu-Bakr might have said that Fadak was not the personal property of the Prophet (S) and the question of its going as an inheritance to his daughter did not arise.

However, when Abu- Bakr accepted it as the property of the Prophet (S), but he then denied that the prophets might leave any inheritance. This is quite unreasonable. The right of inheritance given by the Quran cannot be voided by a tradition which, according to Abu-Bakr, he himself was the sole narrator! Abu-Bakr was silent about the other material inheritance left by the Holy Prophet (S).

If the tradition narrated by Abu-Bakr pertained only to the property in the form of land, then he should have evicted the consorts from the houses they inherited from the Holy Prophet (S)! Eviction was a far-fetched idea; their ownership of the assets was approved by the Caliph. On the basis of this right to ownership that when permission was sought from 'A'ishah for the interment of Imam Al- Hasan ('a) near the Holy Prophet (S), she asserted the right of ownership of the room and refused permission! She used these words while denying permission: 'This house is my house and I do not permit him to be buried in this house!'

In the Holy Quran when reference is made to the houses concerning the consorts of the Holy Prophet (S), reference is made to the

houses of the Holy Prophet (S) as well. If the reference is pertaining to the ownership of the houses, then two persons cannot be the owners of the same premises.

Therefore, in one case, that of the spouses, it is the right to live in the house and in the other instance, it the right of ownership of the house that was vested in the Holy Prophet (S). If the right to ownership of the houses by the consorts is accepted, we have to know how they acquired the ownership?

Did the Holy Prophet (S) make a gift in their favor? If they became owners through donation, then why did not Abu-Bakr evict them and ask for the examination of the witnesses to the process of gift? If such a procedure was not followed, then Abu-Bakr had concocted the tradition about the prophets being prohibited from leaving any inheritance for their families!

If it is a fact that the prophets cannot pass on any inheritance to their next of kin, then why did not the Holy Prophet (S) communicate this commandment to the most concerned person; namely, his daughter and his wives. He did not talk about it in the open as well. The only person he told about it was Abu- Bakr! It is very surprising that the Holy Prophet (S) has left behind detailed instructions about the inheritance of properties for his community, but he mentioned about his personal inheritance only to Abu-Bakr!

After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S), his widows wanted to claim their shares of the inheritance. They preferred their claim through 'Uthman. Therefore, 'A'ishah said: When the Holy Prophet (S) passed away, the wives wanted to send 'Uthman to Abu-Bakr and seek their shares of the Prophet's inheritance. 'A'ishah then said, 'Has not the Prophet (S) said that they (the prophets) do not give any inheritance; whatever they leave behind is a charity?'

If the wives had known about this tradition, they would never have tried to seek their shares. If 'Uthman had known about it, he

could have sounded the ladies about their position. However, 'A'ishah tells to the other wives of the Holy Prophet (S) about this order. Perhaps, she had heard this from her father.

She once said, 'People differed about the inheritance left by the Prophet (S). I found no single person who knew anything about it. However, Abu-Bakr said, 'I have heard the Prophet (S) saying: We, the prophets, do not make anyone our inheritor. Whatever we leave behind is alms.''

If, instead of denying the right of inheritance to all the prophets, it was thought of for only the last Prophet (S), it might have been acceptable to people. However, when all prophets are included in the order, one starts feeling uneasy whether all the heirs of the prophets, from Adam to Jesus, were deprived of their fathers' heritage or not?

Despite all the epochs going by, only Abu-Bakr was fortunate enough to have learned that the prophets have no inheritors! Contrary to this claim, the Holy Quran has talked in clear terms about the inheritance of the prophets. Therefore, about the inheritance left by Prophet David, it says,

'Solomon was the inheritor of David.'

People have tried to interpret this holy Quranic verse in a way that the inheritance received by Prophet Solomon was not material inheritance, but it was the inheritance of knowledge and wisdom. They must know that at the time of the passing away of his father, Prophet Solomon had possessed all the knowledge and wisdom and the inheritance mentioned in the Holy Quran is the material assets of his father, Prophet David. Ibn Qutaybah writes, 'When Prophet David died, Prophet Solomon inherited his realm.'

Muhammad ibn Sa'ib Al-Kalabi says, 'Those good and pedigree horses that were produced before Prophet Solomon were the one thousand steeds that Prophet Solomon had inherited from his father.'

Similarly, through Zachariah, it is related in the Holy Quran:

And surely I fear my cousins after me, and my wife is barren, therefore grant me from Thyself an heir Who should inherit me and inherit from the children of Jacob, and make him, my Lord, one in whom Thou art well pleased. (19:5-6)

Even if interpreting this holy Quranic verse to mean inheritance of knowledge and wisdom is not correct, then knowledge, wisdom, and prophethood are not hereditary. If that meaning is taken, then the fear expressed by Prophet Zachariah loses its meaning. Did he have fear that the people would steal his knowledge and occupy it forcibly?

Or was he scared that, despite not having the capability of prophethood, he was made a prophet? It is evident that such fear was not existed and there was not any reason for its being there. Yet, the fear could have been there that his not having any children, people could have usurped his property and belongings.

Prophet Zachariah did not want that his possessions went to his tribesmen, because they were greedy and avaricious people and they would use the assets for wrong purposes. Therefore, he prayed for such an inheritor who would be liked by Allah and who should use his assets for good purposes.

After these clear proofs, taking shelter behind the tradition and saying that the prophets do not have inheritors is tantamount to going against facts. Against the evidence from the Holy Quran giving credence to a tradition where the narrator is only one person certainly creates doubts about its veracity. The authenticity of this tradition was denied in clear terms by the daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) and by his Successor (‘a).

If Lady Fatimah (‘a) had accepted this tradition as the saying of the Holy Prophet (S), there would have been no reason for her to become angry with Abu-Bakr. To the contrary, she would have sympathized with him saying that he was helpless with regard to

her claim. If Imam Ali (‘a) had accepted this tradition, instead of taking sides with Fatimah (‘a), he would have asked her to forget her claim.

In fact, the events prove that even Abu-Bakr did not have doubts about the authenticity of the tradition nor the caliphs after him gave any cognizance to it. Therefore, in the beginning, Abu-Bakr acknowledged Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra'‘s right to inheritance and even he had written down the document and given to her, but with the intervention of ‘Umar, he had to retract his decision.

Al-Halabi writes, ‘Abu-Bakr wrote the document about Fadak and gave it to Fatimah (‘a). At that moment, ‘Umar came and asked what it was. Abu-Bakr said that he had written down the document about Fatimah’s inheritance that came to her from her father. ‘Umar then asked what he was going to spend on the Muslims while the Arabs were raring to battle with them. Saying this, ‘Umar tore away that document.’

If Abu-Bakr had been certain about the authenticity of the tradition, and was confident that the Holy Prophet (S) was not entitled to an inheritor, he would not have prepared the document in the first instance. When ‘Umar intervened, he did not cancel the deed because Fatimah (‘a) had no right over the property but for other reasons.

If ‘Umar had been confident about the tradition, he would not have needed to mentioned about the monetary needs of the State and could have only insisted on the disqualification of the Holy Prophet’s daughter from the inheritance. Although ‘Umar intervened at that time and tore away the document, his agreement with the tradition narrated by Abu- Bakr was not indicated.

It is recorded in the Sunni reference books of traditions to the extent that, in his own time, accepting the right of Fatimah (‘a) to the inheritance, he had entrusted Fadak to Imam Ali (‘a) and to Al-‘Abbas ibn Abd Al-Muttalib. Therefore, Yaqut Al-Hamawi writes,

'A dispute arose between Ali ('a) and Al-'Abbas ibn Abd Al-Muttalib about Fadak.

Ali ('a) said that the Holy Prophet (S) had given Fadak to Fatimah ('a) in his lifetime. Al-'Abbas denied this and said that the Holy Prophet (S) died intestate leaving Fadak as his property and that he was its inheritor. This dispute reached 'Umar. He said that they understood their matters themselves and he had entrusted it (the Fadak) to them!'

According to this narration, the point of dispute between Ali ('a) and Al- 'Abbas was that whether Fadak was a gifted property or an intestate property of the Holy Prophet (S). Al-'Abbas claimed that since it was a legacy, he had a right over it as a close relative of the Holy Prophet (S). Now, a decision was to be made whether the land was gift, legacy, or a property of the Prophet (S) that, according to one opinion, was to remain in public domain.

If 'Umar thought that it was gift property, he would have handed it over to Ali ('a). If he thought that it was alms, then it would remain as a public property. He allowed it to remain in the joint hands of Ali ('a) and Al-'Abbas. This proves that he neither considered the land as gift nor alms and since he felt that it was an inherited property, he entrusted it to both the persons as they had an interest in it as the inheritors of the deceased.

This proves that if 'Umar had given any credence to the tradition of 'we the Prophets do not leave legacies,' he would not have given this decision. In this matter, people invent an excuse. They say that 'Umar did not transfer the estate to Ali and Al-'Abbas. He had just entrusted it to them as the official representatives! If such was the case, he could have clearly told the persons about his intention while entrusting the property to them.

It is certainly proved from this tradition that 'Umar did accept the right to inheritance and as far as the actual handing over of Fadak was concerned, the coming events do not support it, but it re-

mained as a no-man's-land for long. The men in power allowed its use to whomever they favored in their time!

Therefore, when 'Uthman's reign came, he gifted it to his son-in-law Marwan in AH 34. The historian Abu'l-Fida' writes, ''Uthman gave Fadak as a gift to Marwan although it was alms of the Prophet (S), and Fatimah ('a) had claimed it as an inheritance.'

When Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan came to power, he took Fadak in his control and left a third of it in the use of Marwan, gave a third to 'Umar ibn 'Uthman, and the remaining portion to his own son Abd Al-'Aziz. When 'Umar ibn Abd Al-'Aziz had it as an inheritance, he handed it over to the progeny of Lady Fatimah ('a). Yaqut Al-Hamawi writes, 'When 'Umar ibn Abd Al-'Aziz assumed caliphate, he wrote to the administrator of Al-Madinah ordering that Fadak be returned to the progeny of Fatimah.'

It is evident from this action of 'Umar ibn Abd Al-'Aziz that he did not give any credence to the tradition of 'we the prophets do not leave legacies,' and termed the decisions of the past caliphs as absolutely wrong. It is a highly commendable act that he recognized the truth and returned the usurped right of Fatimah ('a) to her children. However, after him, the same old things happened.

Yazid ibn Abd Al-Malik, on succeeding 'Umar, took back Fadak from the descendants of Lady Fatimah and gave it to the descendants of Marwan. Until the collapse of the Umayyad Dynasty, it remained with the descendants of Marwan. When Abu'l-'Abbas Al-Saffah acquired power, he gave Fadak to Abdullah ibn Al-Hasan ibn Al-Hasan ibn Ali. After Al-Saffah, Al-Mansur, the 'Abbasid ruler, took the land away from the progeny of Al- Hasan ('a).

Al-Mahdi the son of Al-Mansur once again gave the land to the descendants of Fatimah. When Musa ibn Al-Mahdi assumed power, he took away the land as a state property. Until the time of Al-Ma'mun, it remained a state property. On sitting on the throne in AH 210, Al-Ma'mun ordered the administrator of Al-Madinah,

Qutham ibn Ja'far, saying, 'The Prophet (S) had gifted Fadak to his daughter Fatimah ('a).'

It is such a clear and established fact that there is no difference of opinion between the Prophet's Household about it. Fadak requires from Al-Ma'mun that because of his true dedication to the Holy Prophet (S), it is most appropriate that Fadak be given back to them who are its true inheritors. This way the rights ordained by Allah will be discharged and the orders of the Holy Prophet (S) complied with.

Therefore, he orders that this decision be recorded in all offices and the functionaries informed accordingly. At the time of the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S), it was the practice that during the Hajj pilgrimage season, it used to be announced that whoever was given any alms or anything was given as a gift, should come and prefer a claim for it. The claims used to be accepted and the promises fulfilled.

Then, Fatimah ('a) was the most deserving of getting the thing that the Holy Prophet (S) had apportioned for her. Her word and claim should have been accepted. Al- Ma'mun has given written orders to his freed slave, Mubarak Al-Tabari that he should return the estate of Fadak to the progeny of Fatimah ('a) along with the slaves and the grains stored therein.

Therefore, according to the decree of Al-Ma'mun, Fadak was handed over to the descendants of Lady Fatimah ('a). When Al-Mutawakkil assumed power, he again withdrew the estate from them.

With the prevaricating stand of different rulers over the ownership of Fadak, it is evident that the tradition narrated by Abu-Bakr was not given credence by many of them. A ruler like 'Umar ibn Abd Al-'Aziz realized the weak points of the tradition narrated by Abu-Bakr and thought that depriving Fatimah ('a) of her inheritance was an act of gross injustice. He did justice, but injustice

continued to be inflicted on the descendants of Lady Fatimah (‘a) for centuries to come!

A Jurisprudential Viewpoint

Jurisprudents argue that Abu-Bakr’s procedure is in violation of the principles of Muslim jurisprudence, because of the following points:

1. An owner of a real estate is not required to provide a proof; rather, he/she is required to take an oath.

2. Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' (‘a) is the best woman of the Muslim community and the chief of the women of the world, as the Holy Prophet (S) expressed.

She is therefore the most truthful of all people, as ‘A'ishah expressed.71 These points are sufficient to give credence to her in any claim she makes.

3. Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' (‘a), however, established proofs on her claim. Imam Ali (‘a) and the virtuous lady Ummu-Ayman testified to the authenticity of her claim. Nevertheless, Abu-Bakr claimed that her claim was insufficient.

According to jurisprudential rules, any claim that is appertained to a financial case can be admitted when one testifier is provided and an oath is taken.

Abu-Bakr refused the testimony of Imam Ali (‘a), although the Holy Prophet (S) had declared, **‘’Ali is with the truth and the truth is with Ali; and they will never separate from one another until they meet me on the Divne Pond.’**

Finally, Abu-Bakr suspected the testimony of Ummu-Ayman.

It is worth mentioning that Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, once, asked his mentor Ali ibn Al-Faruq, ‘Was Fatimah truthful when she demanded

with Fadak?'

'Yes, she was,' answered the mentor.

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid asked, 'Then, why did Abu-Bakr refuse to give her Fadak while she was truthful?'

The mentor answered, 'If Abu-Bakr gave her Fadak, she would return the next day and demand with the right of her husband in the position held by Abu-Bakr. If she did, Abu-Bakr would not have any answer, because he had already recognized her as truthful in whatever she claimed, without need for testimonies, oaths, and the like!'

Economic Embargo

Economic embargo is the most effective and the most certain way to render ineffective the movement of the opposition and to destroy it, because wealth and riches, in all stages of history, were active agents employed by those in power to suppress their opponents who intended to topple the government.

This method is followed by all the ruling powers that they confiscate the wealth of their opponents or that they prohibited their rivals from spending anything from their wealth so that they may not employ these funds to topple the government or cause harm to it.

Abu-Bakr also took steps in this regard and initiated economic restrictions against Imam Ali ('a) so that he might not have any power to rise up against the government. Therefore, he initiated the following steps:

Abrogation Of The Khums Tax

According to the Holy Quran, a share of the Khums (i.e. one-fifth) tax is given to the family of the Messenger of Allah (S) exclusively.

Thus, the Holy Quran reads:

And know that whatever thing you gain, a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Apostle and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if you believe in Allah and in that which We revealed to Our servant, on the day of distinction, the day on which the two parties met; and Allah has power over all things. (8:41)'

All historicists and narrators have unanimously agreed that the Holy Prophet (S) specified a share of the Khums tax for himself and his relatives and this practice continued up to the last hour of his lifetime. When Abu-Bakr came to power, he abrogated the share of the Holy Prophet (S) as well as that of his relatives and deprived Banu-Hashim of this, making them equal to ordinary populace.72

Lady Fatimah ('a) the daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) sent a message to Abu- Bakr to give her the rest of the Khums levies of Khaybar, but he refused to pay her anything.73 Thus, poverty hovered over the family of the Holy Prophet (S) and they were deprived of the most important source of funds that Almighty Allah had specified for them.

Confiscation Of The Prophet's Inheritance

Abu-Bakr took over control of the entire property left by the Holy Prophet (S) that could have become a source of income for the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). He thus added it to the public treasury and blocked in the face of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) any source of living they would enjoy, thus imposing a new restriction upon the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and establishing an economic embargo against them so that they would remain incapable of taking any action against him.

Abu-Bakr's False Argument

In order to justify his confiscation of the Holy Prophet's inheritance and deprivation of Lady Fatimah ('a) of it, Abu-Bakr claimed that he had heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying, 'We, the prophets, do not leave any inheritance and whatever we leave is charity.'

Based on this saying, Abu-Bakr deprived Lady Fatimah ('a) of her inheritance. However, this saying is fraught with numerous defects and points of weakness:

1. If this tradition had been correct and authentic, Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a) must have had acquaintance with it; hence, she would not have come out to demand with what is not hers, because it is impossible for her, in her capacity as the most truthful woman of the world and her familiarity with what her father (S) had said, to demand something in which she had no lawful share.

2. It is impossible for the Holy Prophet (S) to keep secret from his beloved daughter a law that is related to her religious duties. The concealment of such laws inevitably leads the Muslim community to be involved in unlawful matters and to be subjected to mutual conflict. It is well known that the Holy Prophet (S) educated his daughter to be a referential authority in the religious laws and fed her with the spirit of piety and faith.

3. It is not possible at all that the Holy Prophet (S) had concealed this tradition from Imam Ali ('a), who had full acquaintance with all of the secrets of the Holy Prophet (S) and who was the door to the city of his knowledge, the gate to the abode of his wisdom, the most equitable of the people, and the most conversant of the laws of the religion. If the Holy Prophet (S) was not to leave inheritance, Imam Ali ('a) would be the first to know this matter and the Holy Prophet (S) would not conceal it from him.

4. If this tradition had been authentic, the family of the Holy Prophet (S) would have known about it, because they were the closest to him.

5. If this tradition had had any authenticity, it would not have remained concealed from the Holy Prophet's wives at least. In fact, when 'Uthman ibn 'Affan came to power, the widows of the Holy Prophet (S) demanded him to give them their shares from the Holy Prophet's inheritance.

6. Some scholars have understood this tradition to mean: 'We, the prophets, do not give our inheritances as alms,' or 'The alms that are left behind us, the Prophets, are not subject to the inheritance.' In both cases, the tradition has nothing to do with preventing the prophets' heirs from receiving their shares from their legacies.

The above mentioned points are the objections that apply to this tradition and the conclusion derived from this exposes that this saying is the weakest and the most inauthentic.

Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra's Speech

The world became straitened for the beloved daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) and the steps that Abu-Bakr had initiated to impose economic restrictions had made the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) financially incapable. As a result, Lady Fatimah ('a) decided to provide her points of evidence before Abu-Bakr in order to urge the Muslims to overthrow him.

According to narrators, Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a) became very angry; she therefore put on her veil, wrapped her garment around her body, and, accompanied by some of her female relatives and neighbors, she walked majestically just like the stride of the Holy Prophet (S) until she arrived in the presence of Abu-Bakr at a time when a number of people from the Muhajirun, the Ansar, and others were also present there.

A curtain was put between her and the attendants. She first sighed in grief, pain, and weeping. The people thus began to weep due to her sad wailing, and turmoil began to be aroused in that gathering, because the attendants saw in her the character of her great

father who had no other child except her and because they all felt that they had been negligent with regard to her right and her husband's.

She allowed the people respite that their wails would calm down and their tears would stop flowing. At that time, she commenced her address with statements of praise and glorification of the Almighty and continued her sermon like flowing water in such a way that no one had heard a more eloquent and meaningful discourse:

Praise be to Allah for that which He bestowed upon us; thanks be to Him for all that which He inspired; and commended in His Name for that which He provided: Form prevalent favors which He created, and abundant benefactions which He offered and perfect grants which He presented; (such benefactions) that their number is much too plentiful to compute; bounties too vast to measure; their limit was too distant to realize.

He recommended to them (i.e. His creatures) to gain more (of His benefaction) by being grateful for their continuity. He ordained Himself praise worthy by giving generously to His creatures. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah Who is One without partner, a statement which sincere devotion is made to be its interpretation; hearts guarantee its continuation, and illuminated in the minds is its sensibility. He cannot be perceived with vision, neither be described with tongues, nor can imagination surround His state.

He originated things but not from anything that existed before them, and created them without examples to follow. Rather, He created them with His might and dispersed them according to His will; not for a need did He create them; nor for a benefit (for Him) did He shape them, But to establish His wisdom, Bring attention to His obedience, manifest His might, lead His creatures to humbly venerate Him, and to exalt His decrees. He then made the reward for His obedience, and punishment for his disobedience, so as to protect His creatures from His Wrath and amass them into His Paradise.

I too bear witness that my father Muhammad is His slave and messenger whom He chose prior to sending him, named him before sending him when creatures were still concealed in that which was transcendental, guarded from that which was appalling, and associated with the termination and nonexistence. For Allah the Exalted knew that which was to follow, comprehended that which will come to pass, and realized the place of every event.

Allah has sent him (i.e. Muhammad) as perfection for His commands, a resolution to accomplish His rule, and an implementation of the decrees of His Mercy. So, he found the nations to vary in their faiths, obsessed by their fires, worshipping their idols, and denying Allah despite their knowledge of Him.

Therefore, Allah illuminated their darkness with my father Muhammad, uncovered obscurity from their hearts, and cleared the clouds from their insights. He revealed guidance among the people; so, he delivered them from being led astray, led them away from misguidance, guided them to the proper religion, and called them to the straight path.

Allah then chose to recall him back in mercy, love and preference. So, Muhammad is in comfort from the burden of this world; he is surrounded with devoted angels, the satisfaction of the Merciful Lord, and the nearness of the powerful King.

May the blessings of Allah be upon my father: His Prophet, trusted one, chosen one from among His creatures, and His sincere friend, and may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a) then addressed the crowd, saying,

Surely, you are Allah's slaves and at His command. You are the bearers of His religion and revelation. You are Allah's trusted ones with yourselves and His messengers to the nations. Amongst you does He have righteous authority; a covenant He brought unto you, and an heir He left to guard you; that is the eloquent book of Allah, the truthful Quran, the brilliant light, and the shining beam.

Its insights are indisputable, its secrets are revealed, its indications are manifest, and its followers are blessed by it. The Quran leads its adherents to goodwill, and hearing it leads to salvation. With it are the bright divine authorities achieved, His manifest determination acquired, His prohibited decrees avoided, His manifest evidence recognized, His satisfying proofs made apparent, His permissions granted, and His laws written.

So, Allah made belief to be purification for you from polytheism. He caused prayer to be exaltation for you from conceit, alms to be purification for the soul and a cause of growth in subsistence, fasting to be implantation of devotion, pilgrimage to be construction of religion, justice to be harmony of the hearts, obeying us (the Ahl Al-Bayt) to be management of the nation, loyalty to us to be safeguard from disunity, jihad (struggle) to be strengthening of Islam, patience to be helping course for deserving (divine) reward, enjoining the right to be public welfare, piety to the parents to be safeguard from wrath, maintaining close relations with one's kin to be cause for a longer life and multiplying the number of descendants, reTalibation to be for sparing bloodshed, fulfillment of vows to be subjecting oneself to mercy, completion of weights and measures to be a cause for preventing the neglect of others' rights, forbiddance of drinking wines to be exaltation from atrocity, avoiding slander to be a veil from curse, and abandoning theft to be a reason for deserving chastity.

Allah has also prohibited polytheism so that one can devote himself to His Lordship. Therefore, fear Allah as He should be feared and die not except in a state of Islam. Obey Allah in that which He has commanded you to do and that which He has forbidden, for surely those truly fear among His servants who have knowledge.

Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' (‘a) then added,

O people, be it known to you that I am Fatimah and my father is Muhammad. I say that repeatedly and initiate it continually. I say not what I say mistakenly, nor do I do what I do aimlessly.

'Now has come to you an apostle from amongst yourselves; it grieves him that you should perish, ardently anxious is he over you, and to the believers he is most kind and merciful.' Thus, if you identify and recognize him, you shall realize that he is my father and not the father of any of your women and the brother of my cousin (Ali) rather than any of your men.

What an excellent identity he was! May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his descendants. Thus, he propagated the Message, by coming out openly with the warning, and while inclined away from the path of the polytheists, (whom he) struck their strength and seized their throats, while he invited (all) to the way of his Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching.

He destroyed idols and defeated heroes until their group fled and turned their backs. So, night revealed its dawn, righteousness uncovered its genuineness, the voice of the religious authority spoke out loud, the evil discords were silenced, the crown of hypocrisy was diminished, and the tightening of infidelity and desertion were untied. Thus, you spoke the statement of devotion amongst a band of starved ones.

And you were on the edge of a hole of fire; (you were) the drink of the thirsty one, the opportunity of the desiring one, the firebrand of him who passes in haste, and the step for feet; and you used to drink from the water gathered on roads and eat jerked meat. You were despised outcasts always in fear of abduction from those around you.

Yet, Allah rescued you through my father Muhammad after much ado and after he was confronted by mighty men, the Arab beasts, and the demons of the people of the Book Who, whenever they ignited the fire of war, Allah extinguished it; and whenever the thorn of the devil appeared, or a mouth of the polytheists opened wide in defiance, he would strike its discords with his brother Ali who comes not back until he treads its wing with the sole of his feet, and extinguishes its flames with his sword.

Ali is diligent in Allah's affair, near to the Messenger of Allah, a master among Allah's worshippers, setting to work briskly, sincere in his advice, earnest and exerting himself (in service to Islam); while you were calm

and feeling safe in your comfortable lives, waiting for us to meet disasters, and awaiting the spread of news. You fell back during every battle and took to your heels at times of fighting.

Yet, when Allah chose His Prophet from the dwell of His prophets and the abode of His sincere servants, the thorns of hypocrisy appeared on you while the garment of faith has not worn out yet, the misguided ignorant people spoke out, the sluggish ignorant came to the front and brayed, the camel of the vain wiggled his tail in your courtyards.

And when the Devil stuck his head from its place of hiding and called upon you, he found you responsive to his invitation and observing his deceits. He then aroused you and found you quick to answer him, and invited you to wrath, therefore; you branded other than your camels and proceeded to other than your drinking places.

Then while the era of the Prophet was still near, the gash was still wide, the scar had not yet healed, and the Messenger was not yet buried. A quick undertaking as you claimed, aimed at preventing discord (trial). Surely, they have fallen into trial already! And indeed Hell surrounds the unbelievers. How preposterous! What an idea! What a falsehood!

For Allah's Book is still amongst you, its affairs are apparent, its rules are manifest, its signs are dazzling, its restrictions are visible, and its commands are evident. Yet, indeed you have cast it behind your backs! What! Do you detest it? Or according to something else you wish to rule? Evil would be the exchange for the wrongdoers!

And if anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), it never will it be accepted from him; and in the hereafter, he will be in the ranks of those who have lost. Surely, you have not waited until its stampede seized and it became obedient. You then started arousing its flames, instigating its coal, complying with the call of the misled devil, quenching the light of the manifest religion, and extinguished the light of the sincere Prophet.

You concealed sips on froth and proceeded towards his (the Prophet) kin and children in swamps and forests (meaning you plot against them in

deceitful ways), but we are patient with you as if we are being notched with knives and stung by spearheads in our abdomens, Yet, now you claim that there is not inheritance for us! What!

'Do they then seek after a judgment of (the Days of) ignorance? But how, for a people whose faith is assured, can give better judgment than Allah?' Do you not know that I am his daughter? Yes, indeed it is as obvious to you as sunlight in midday.

O Muslims! Will my inheritance be usurped? O son of Abu- Quhafah! Where is it in the Book of Allah that you inherit your father and I do not inherit mine? Surely, you have come up with an unprecedented thing. Do you intentionally abandon the Book of Allah and cast it behind your back? Do you not read where it says: 'And Solomon inherited David'?

And when it narrates the story of Zachariah, the Quran says:

'So, give me an heir as from thyself; one that will inherit me, and inherit the posterity of Jacob. And: 'But kindred by hood have prior rights against each other in the Book of Allah.'

And: 'Allah (thus) directs you as regards your children's (inheritance) to the male, a portion equal to that of two females.' And: 'If he leaves any goods, that he make a bequest to parents and next of kin, according to reasonable usage; this is due from the pious ones.'

You claim that I have no share and that I do not inherit my father! What! Did Allah reveal a (Quranic) verse regarding you, from which He excluded my father? Or do you say: 'These (i.e. Fatimah and her father) are the people of two different faiths; they do not inherit each other?!' Are we, my father and I, not adhering to one faith? Or is it that you have more knowledge about the specifications and generalizations of the Quran than my father and my cousin (Ali)?

So, here you are! Take it! (Ready with) its nose rope and saddled! But if shall encounter you on the Day of Gathering; (thus) what a wonderful judge is Allah, a claimant is Muhammad, and a day is the Day of Rising.

At the time of the Hour shall the wrongdoers lose and it shall not benefit you to regret (your actions) then! For every Message, there is a time limit and soon shall you know who will be inflicted with torture that will humiliate him and who will be confronted by an everlasting punishment.

Lady Fatimah (‘a) then turned towards the Ansar and said:

O you people of intellect, the strong supporters of the nation, and those who embraced Islam! What is this shortcoming in defending my right? What is this slumber (while you see) injustice (being done toward me)? Did not the Messenger of Allah, my father, used to say: ‘A man is upheld (remembered) by his children?’ How quick you have violated (his orders)!

How soon you have plotted against us! But you still are capable (of helping me in) my attempt, and powerful (to help me) in that which I request and (in) my pursuit (of it). Or do you say: ‘Muhammad has perished!’

Surely, this is a great calamity. Its damage is excessive, its injury is great, and its wound (is much too deep) to heal.

The earth became darkened with his departure, the stars eclipsed for the calamity of losing him, hopes were seized, mountains submitted, sanctity was violated, and holiness was encroached upon after his death. Therefore, this, by Allah, is the great affliction and the grand calamity; there is not an affliction which is the like of it nor will there be a sudden misfortune (as surprising as this).

The Book of Allah -excellent be praising Him- announced in the courtyards (of your houses) in the place where you spend your evenings and mornings; a call, a cry, a recitation, and (verses) in order. It has previously come upon His (Allah's) Prophets and Messengers; (for it is) a decree final and predestination fulfilled: ‘Muhammad is not but an apostle: many were the apostles that passed away before him. If he died or he was slain, will you then turn back on your heels? If any did turn back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; but Allah (on the other hand) will swiftly reward those who (serve Him) with gratitude.’

O sons of Qilah (i.e. the tribes of Al-Aws and Al-Khazjar who form the Ansar)! will I be usurped the inheritance of my father while you hear and see me and while you are sitting and gathered around me? You hear my call and you are included in the (news of the) affair! You are numerous and well equipped! (You have) the means and the power, and the weapons and the shields.

Yet, the call reaches you but you do not answer; the cry comes to you but you do not come to help, while you are characterized by struggle, known for goodness and welfare, you are the selected group (which was chosen), and the best ones chosen by the Messenger for us, the Ahl Al-Bayt. You fought the Arabs, bore with pain and exhaustion, struggled against the nations, and resisted their heroes.

We were still, so were you in ordering you, and you in obeying us until Islam became triumphant, the accomplishment of the days came near, the fort of polytheism was subjected, the outburst of war was subjected, the outburst of infidelity calmed down, and the system of religion was well-ordered.

Thus, (why have you) become confused after clearness, concealed matters after announcing them, turned on your heels after daring, and associated (others with Allah) after believing? Will you not fight people who violated their oaths, plotted to expel the Apostle and became aggressive by being the first (to assault) you? Do you fear them? Nay, it is Allah Whom you should more justly fear, if you believe!

Nevertheless, I see that you are inclined to easy living, dismissed he who is more worthy of guardianship (i.e. Ali), and secluded yourselves with meekness and dismissed that which you accepted. Yet, if you show ingratitude; you and all on earth together, yet, Allah is free of all wants, worthy of all praise. Surely, I have said all that I have said with full knowledge that you intent to forsake me, and knowing the betrayal that your hearts sensed.

But it is the state of soul, the effusion of fury, the dissemination of (what is in) the chest and the presentation of the proof. Hence, here it is! Bag it (leadership and) put it on the back of an ill she- camel, which has a thin

hump with everlasting grace, marked with the wrath of Allah, and the blame of ever (which leads to) the Fire of (the wrath of Allah kindled (to a blaze), that which does mount (right) to the hearts, for Allah witnesses what you do and soon will the unjust assailants know what vicissitudes their affairs will take! And I am the daughter of a warner (i.e. the Prophet) to you against a severe punishment. So, act and so will we, and wait, and we shall wait. 74

In her incomparable discourse, Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a) spoke on the philosophy of Islam and discussed the causes of the laws and the wisdom of Islamic rules and regulations. She described the condition of the people before the dawn of Islam that to what extent they were mired in oppressing each other, how backward they were in knowledge and how ignorance dominated their minds, especially in the Arabian Peninsula, where they were targets of humiliation and were on the verge of the pit of fire, that every drinker used to derive enjoyment from them and every greedy one was eyeing and everyone who moved used to take advantage from them and they were trampled under the feet of all those who walked so much so that they were in such terrible poverty that sometimes they had to satiate their hunger with carrion and quench their thirst with waste water.

They were getting more and more arrested in those terrible circumstances when, through the medium of the Holy Prophet (S), Almighty Allah bestowed upon them with salvation and freedom, led them to the path of progress and development, and made him the leader of their community. How great the superiority and favors of the Holy Prophet (S) was on the Arabs and on all people!

Lady Fatimah ('a) then alluded to the merits of her cousin Imam Ali ('a) and his manifest struggle and efforts in defense of Islam against the enemies at a time when the Muslims of Quraysh (i.e. the Muhajirun) spent a life of comfort and security and had no role in the propagation of Islam.

Rather, as the Holy Prophet (S) has described, at the time of confrontation, they used to run away from the battlefield and they

used to flee in horror, while regarding the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a), they used to wait for an opportunity or used to wish that some tragedy would befall them.

In her sermon, Lady Fatimah (‘a) expressed intense regret at the changed circumstances and the deviation of Muslims and their falling into the lure of selfish desires and pride. She prophesied that they would be the victims of terrible events and calamities due to their sins and deviations from that which the Almighty had prescribed for them to be always attached to the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a). After she had spoken on these matters, she referred to her inheritance that she was supposed to have received from her father but she had been deprived from it.

Hearts began to burn, eyes opened wide, and people began to feel suffocated as life went away then came back so that the air which had gone should come back and truth was about to be re-established. However, Abu-Bakr was well known for his quick tongue and with the power of diplomacy.

He was able to regain control of the situation and he saved his government from a revolution. He expressed utmost honor and respect for the beloved daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) as if he had more regard for her than his own daughter ‘A'ishah. From the depths of his being, he seemed to hold her in reverence.

He also expressed a deep grief for the passing away of her dear father while he had actually wished thar the Prophet (S) had died before that time. He said that he had not initiated these steps on his own and he had obtained the seat of rulership of his own. It was actually the choice of the majority and consensus of the people!

In this way, he won over the hearts that had started to dislike him, cooled the fine of revolution, and destroyed all the signs.

It appears from recorded historical events that Lady Fatimah (‘a) was successful at the beginning in persuading Abu-Bakr to hand

back Fadak to her.

Listen to a part of a speech he (according to some historians) delivered after hearing Lady Fatimah's speech. He said:

'O daughter of the Messenger of Allah! Surely, the Prophet is your father, not anyone else's, the brother of your husband, not any other man's; he surely preferred him over all his friends and (Ali) supported him in every important matter, no one loves you save the lucky and no one hates you save the wretched. You are the blessed progeny of Allah's Messenger, the chosen ones, our guides to goodness, and our path to Paradise.

You -the best of all women and the daughter of the best of all prophets- are truthful in all of your words, excelling in reason. You shall not be driven back from your right... But I surely heard your father saying, 'We, the group of prophets, do not inherit, nor are we inherited.'

Yet, this is my situation and property, it is yours (if you wish); it shall not be concealed from you, nor will it be stored away from you. You are the choicest of your father's nation and the blessed tree of your descendants. Your property shall not be usurped against your will nor can your name be defamed. Your judgment shall be executed in all that which I possess. Thus, do you think that I violate your father's will?'

Lady Fatimah ('a) then refuted Abu-Bakr's claim that the Holy Prophet (S) had stated that prophets cannot be inherited. She ('a) said:

Glory be to Allah! How strange this is! Surely, Allah's Messenger did not abandon Allah's Book nor did he violate His commands. Rather, he followed its decrees and adhered to its chapters. So, do you unite with treachery justifying your acts with fabrications? Indeed, this -after his departure- is similar to the disasters that were plotted against him during his lifetime. But, behold! This is Allah's Book, a just judge and a de-

cisive speaker, saying, ''One that will (truly) inherit me and inherit the posterity of Jacob.'

The Quran also says, **'And Solomon inherited David.'**
Thus, He (Glory be to Him) clearly made share of all heirs, decreed from the amounts of inheritance, allowed for males and females, and eradicated all doubts and ambiguities (pertaining to this issue which existed with the) bygones. Nay! But your minds have made up a tale (that may pass) with you, but (for me) patience is most fitting against that which you assert; it is Allah (alone) whose help can be sought.

However, at later times, Abu-Bakr regretted extremely his exceeding all bounds in usurpation of Lady Fatimah's rights, attacking her house, and depriving her of her inheritance. Hence, he is reported to have said, 'I wish I had not attacked Fatimah's house, even if war was ambushing me there.'[75]

Unsuccessful Attempt To Gain Lady Fatimah's Satisfaction

Abu-Bakr and his friend 'Umar tried to appease Lady Fatimah ('a) as an attempt to give their government a sort of legality and to use her satisfaction with them as a means to gain the Muslims' satisfaction. They went to her house and asked permission to visit her, but she refused to receive them. Then, for another time, they tried to obtain her permission to visit her, but she again refused.

They therefore went to Imam Ali ('a) and asked him to intercede for them with her. When Imam Ali ('a) did, Lady Fatimah ('a) responded to his request and allowed Abu-Bakr and 'Umar to visit her. When they came to her house, they greeted her, but she refused to respond. They then advanced a few steps forward and sat before her. She again turned her face away from them. They then insistently begged her to listen to their words.

So, she permitted them to speak. Hence, Abu-Bakr took the initiative and said, 'O most beloved to the Messenger of Allah! Verily,

the relatives of Allah's Messenger are dearer to me than my own relatives, and you personally are dearer to me than my daughter 'A'ishah.

On the day when your father departed life, I wished I would soon die and would not live after him. I know who you are and I recognize your virtue and honor. After all that, do you think that I may deprive you of your due and your inheritance from Allah's Messenger? However, I heard Allah's Messenger saying, 'We do not leave inheritances. Whatever we leave must be considered alms.''

Because Lady Fatimah ('a) had already proved the falsity of this tradition in her previous sermon, she saw it repetitive to repeat what she had said earlier.

She then turned to Abu-Bakr and addressed her words to 'Umar and him, saying,

I adjure you by Allah, did you not hear the Messenger of Allah saying, 'The pleasure of Fatimah is part of my pleasure and the displeasure of Fatimah is part of my displeasure. Whoever loves Fatimah my daughter has loved me, whoever pleases Fatimah has pleased me, and whoever displeases Fatimah has displeased me'?'

Giving credence to her words, they both answered that they had heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying so.

She then raised her hands towards the heavens and said with sadness and wounded heart,

I call Allah and His angels to bear witness for me that you both have displeased me and you both have never pleased me. Moreover, when I will meet the Messenger of Allah, I will definitely complain to him against you.

Lady Fatimah ('a) then addressed Abu-Bakr, saying,

By Allah, I will invoke Allah's displeasure upon you in every prayer I will do. [76]

How heavy these words were! Indeed, they were heavier than the strikes of swords. The ground shook under the feet of these two men and rotated like a quern that they left her tottering for the horrible situation in which they put themselves. They left Lady Fatimah's house with a great disappointment, since they understood how much the wrath that they had burdened themselves with was.

The least thing Abu-Bakr should do at these moments was to weep and feel deeply sad, because he had missed the pleasure of Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a) whose pleasure would please Almighty Allah and whose displeasure would displease Him, just as her father had declared.77

Lights On Imam Ali's Attitude

The attitude of Imam Ali ('a) to the government of Abu-Bakr was negative. He isolated people totally and did not participate in this government at all; rather, he devoted himself to writing down the religious laws and the exegesis of the Holy Quran. He thus turned away from the ruling authorities and they turned away from him, except in cases that a legal question would bother them and they could not find any answer. Only then would they resort to him to find the answer.

Many people wonder why Imam Ali ('a) did not oppose Abu-Bakr and open a front against him, thus taking back his right forcibly rather than rejecting this procedure and secluding himself from all political affairs.

Imam Ali ('a), answering such questions, provided some reasons that made him stop demanding with his right of holding the position of leadership. Some of these reasons are as follows:

1. Imam Ali ('a) did not have enough military power that might make the change and give him victory over his opponents. On

many occasions, Imam Ali (‘a) referred to this point. For instance, in his famous sermon called *Al- Shaqshaqiyyah*, the Imam (‘a) says,

Then I began to think whether I should assault or endure calmly the blinding darkness of tribulations wherein the grown up are made feeble and the young grow old and the true believer acts under strain until he meets Allah (on his death). I found that endurance thereon was wiser. So I adopted patience although there was pricking in the eye and suffocation (of mortification) in the throat. I watched the plundering of my inheritance.[78]

On another occasion, Imam Ali (‘a), explaining the reason for not revolting against Abu-Bakr, said,

I looked and found that there is no supporter for me except family, so I refrained from thrusting them unto death. I kept my eyes closed despite motes in them. I drank despite choking of throat. I exercised patience despite trouble in breathing and despite having to take sour colocynth as food. [79]

The overwhelming majority paid homage to Abu-Bakr under the pressure of ‘Umar. Intending to put them under argument, Imam Ali (‘a) led Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' (‘a) to the houses of the Muhajirun and the Ansar, asking them for help and for rebelling against the ruling regime. However, they said to her, ‘O daughter of Allah’s Messenger! We have already paid homage to this man.’ Refuting this claim, Lady Fatimah (‘a) answered,

Will you then let the inheritance of Allah’s Messenger leave his house to join other houses?

Making an unjustifiable apology, they said, ‘O daughter of Allah’s Messenger, if only your husband offered this to us before Abu-Bakr had done, we would never have accepted anyone save him.’

Here, Imam Ali (‘a) answered them reproachfully,

Was it possible for me to leave the body of Allah's Messenger unburied in his house and go out to quarrel these people about his authority?

Confirming the words of her husband, Lady Fatimah (‘a) said,

*Abu'l-Hasan did nothing but what he ought to do. They did what Allah shall certainly punish them for it.*80

2. Imam Ali (‘a) always cared for and worked towards maintaining unity among Muslims. He therefore had to keep peace with these men who usurped leadership from him. Declaring this fact openly, the Imam (‘a) said when people were determined to pay homage to ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan,

You have certainly known that I am the most rightful of all others for the Caliphate. By Allah, so long as the affairs of Muslims remain intact and there is no oppression in it save on myself I shall keep quiet seeking reward for it (from Allah) and keeping aloof from its attractions and allurements for which you aspire. 81

Grievances Of Lady Fatimah

One of the most catastrophic tragedies that inflicted Imam Ali (‘a) was that he had to see the harsh pains befall Lady Fatimah (‘a) incessantly. The passing away of the Holy Prophet (S) was a terrible tragedy for Lady Fatimah (‘a) who was so much devastated by this tragedy that dark clouds of grief surrounded her due to the absence of her father who was more precious to her than her own life.

She used to visit her father's grave and circumambulate it in an extremely shocking condition. She used to throw herself on the grave, take a handful of dust from it, rub it over her eyes and face, smell it, kiss it, and derive some comfort from it. At that time, she used to weep in excess, repeating these poetic verses:

What surprises if one who smells the dust of Ahmad will refrain from smelling any fragrance all the life?

Such calamities have befallen me that if they had fallen on days they would have turned into nights.
Say to the one who is concealed beneath layers of dust: If you can hear my plea and entreaty.
I was in the refuge of Muhammad in such a way that I never saw hardships or problems, as he was my embellishment.
And today in front of the debased ones I am being oppressed and I cannot say anything due to the grief and I cannot remove our oppressors.
Thus just as the pigeon weeps in grief at night on the branches, I weep during the day.
After I have made grief my companion and made it my habit to weep in your separation. 82

These poetic verses describe accurately the true picture of grief and sorrow of Lady Fatimah (‘a) because they speak of the emotions that beset her on the passing away of her father-a father who had so much love and regard for her and she also loved him more than anything else.

The sorrowful lines also describe her status and position during the lifetime of her father. She was the most beloved and respected lady among Muslims. However, after the passing away of her father, the people did not take into consideration her position and they helped each other to disregard her status so much so that she had to face injustice from those debased persons and take care to protect her veiling.

She announced the oppressions to which she was subjected and she defended herself because there was no one who could defend effectively or speak on her behalf.

She took refuge in weeping and grief until she became one of the five most inclined to weeping persons all over history. Her pain and sorrow at the death of her father was so severe that when Anas ibn Malik, once, sought permission to give condolence to her on the great tragedy and he was of those who had participated in the Holy Prophet’s burial ceremony, she asked him, *‘Are you Anas ibn Malik?’*

'Yes, I am, O daughter of the Messenger of Allah,' replied Anas.

She spoke with a heavy heart and asked him, *'O Anas, how did you yield yourselves to strew dust on Allah's Messenger?'*[83]

Anas interrupted his statement, came out weeping, and devastated in grief.

One day, Lady Fatimah ('a) insisted on Imam Ali ('a) to show her the dress of her father in which he was given the funeral bath. Responding to her demand, Imam Ali ('a) brought the dress to her. Once her eyes fell on that dress, she took it in her hands, smelt it, and then kissed it, because she found in it the fragrance of her father who had been taken away from her and laid in the everlasting place of rest. As she put the dress on her eyes, her heart split up in grief and it was as if she had lost consciousness.

The Prophet's daughter continued to weep and lament in the light of the day and the darkness of the night and the remembrance of her farther remained fresh with her all her brief life after her father's passing away. Such was the intensity of her lamentation that many people were disturbed by it so much that they petitioned Imam Ali ('a) to ask her to limit her lamentations to a particular time.

Imam Ali ('a) spoke to her and she accepted it. During the day, she used to go to the outskirts of Al-Madinah with her two sons. She sat under the shade of a tree and lamented her father day and night. When the sun would be about to set, Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn used to go with their father and bring her home, while she used to be in agony.

Those people went out and cut off that tree and she had to sit under sunlight to lament her father. Therefore, Imam Ali ('a) constructed a dwelling for her and named it the house of sorrows (*bayt Al- ahzan*), so that the memory of her grief would endure for a longer time. About this house, Imam Al-Mahdi ('a) is reported to have said,

Do you think that I may take a house of happiness after that house of sorrow? No, I will not. I swear it by her greatness.

The beloved daughter of the Messenger of Allah (S) spent her days in that house of sorrows and lamented her father, addressing him in isolation, and wept bitterly in her grief. When night fell, Imam Ali ('a) would go and along with his two sons to bring her home.

The grief affected Lady Fatimah ('a) so deeply that she was afflicted with such a terrible illness that she became confined to her bed and she did not have any strength to stand up on her feet. Thus, some Muslim women went to visit her. They said, 'O daughter of Allah's Messenger, how do you feel today?'

She looked at them in a forlorn manner and spoke in a soft voice full of sorrow, *'I am sick of your world and pleased at your separation with sadness. I go for meeting with the Lord and His Messenger. Neither was our right protected, nor our position respected, nor the will in our favor accepted, nor our sanctity observed.'* 84

A fearful silence fell upon those women and a severe grief beset their features. Their eyes were filled with tears and they went to their homes in a slow gait. They told their husbands what the Prophet's daughter had mentioned. The effect of her words was more severe than the strikes of a sword, because they realized their shortcomings regarding the memory of their Prophet (S).

Some widows of the Holy Prophet (S) went to visit her. They said, 'O daughter of Allah's Messenger! Let us help you take a bath.'

She did not accept their offer, saying, 'Do you want to say the same thing that you had said about my mother? I do not need anything from you.'

Towards Paradise

The commemoration of the Holy Prophet (S) brought such severe illness to his daughter Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' (‘a) that her physique completely weakened in such a way that she did not have strength remaining in her to even get up from her bed. She was slowly withering away like a flower deprived of moisture, because death was approaching her quickly while she was yet in her early youth.

Too nigh was the time of her meeting with her father who had separated from her and along with him were gone the affection and kindness he had showered her.

It became obvious that she was soon to bid farewell to this world. She summoned her cousin Imam Ali (‘a) and stated her bequest to him, which, among other points, expressed instructions that her holy mortal remains should be consigned to the dust in the darkness of the night and that none of those who had oppressed her be allowed to attend the funeral, because they were her enemies and the enemies of her father, as she expressed.

She willed that her grave would be concealed so that it would remain a symbol of her displeasure all over history.

She also told Imam Ali (‘a) that after she would pass away, he should marry Umamah so that this woman would take care of Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn (‘a). She finally willed that her dead body would be put in a coffin that would cover the entire body, because people at that time used to put the dead bodies on a bed that showed the body.

So, she did not want for anyone to see her dead body. Asma' bint ‘Umays made an enclosed bier for Lady Fatimah (‘a) so that when she would be taken to her grave, no one should be able to discern the shape of her body. Asma' had seen a similar device in Abyssinia when she resided there.

When Lady Fatimah (‘a) saw it, she was pleased and she smiled. This was the first time she smiled after the passing away of her fa-

ther. 85

Imam Ali (‘a), having assured that all her instructions should be carried out, left her while grief and sorrow covered him totally.

On the last day of her lifetime, Lady Fatimah (‘a) was seen to be slightly comfortable and she expressed her happiness, because she knew that it was the day when she would be joined with her father.

Hence, she gave bath to her two sons and prepared a meal for them that would suffice them that day. She then told them to go and visit the tomb of their grandfather. She glanced at them for the last time and her heart was filled with pain of grief and sorrow.

Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn departed with a sort of uneasiness in their hearts. They had a terrible premonition which caused them sadness and grief. Lady Fatimah (‘a) then glanced at Asma' bint ‘Umays, who was appointed to nurse her, and said, *‘O mother!’*

‘Yes, O beloved daughter of Allah’s Messenger (S)?’ replied Asma’. Lady Fatimah (‘a) said, *‘Prepare bathing water for me.’*

Asma' arose and brought water, and Lady Fatimah (‘a) took a bath. Again, she asked Asma’ to bring her new dress.

Asma' brought her dress and again Lady Fatimah (‘a) asked, *‘Arrange my bed in the middle of the house.’*

Asma' became greatly worried and she began to tremble, because she knew that the time of death of the Prophet’s daughter was near.

Asma' provided her with whatever she had desired. Lady Fatimah (‘a) rested on her bed and, turning her face towards the kiblah direction, she softly called out to Asma', *‘O mother, very soon, I will depart life. No one should remove my clothes as I have purified myself.’*

Then she began to recite Quranic verses until her soul departed her body to ascend to the Lord so that she would meet her father, surrounded by the angels and received by the prophets. Verily, the sky of this world has never shaded a person like the daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) in sacredness and level of faith. By her death, the last direct descendant of the Holy Prophet (S) departed from this world.

Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn returned home, but could not find their mother. They rushed to Asma' and asked her about their mother. With heavy tears, Asma' said, 'O my masters, your mother has passed away! Go and inform your father.'

This news fell upon them like a bolt of lightning. They rushed to their departed mother and Al-Hasan threw himself upon her, saying, *'O my mother! Speak to me before my soul leaves my body.'*

Al-Husayn threw himself on her, weeping and saying, *'O my mother! I am your son Al-Husayn. Speak to me before my heart bursts.'*

Asma' kissed, comforted, and told them to go to their father immediately and convey the news to him.

The two boys went out to the mosque of their grandfather the Messenger of Allah (S) and when they came near the mosque, their wails raised up.

Muslims came forward to welcome them as they thought that the children were weeping in the memory of their grandfather. So, they asked them, 'O sons of Allah's Messenger (S), what has made you weep? Perhaps, upon seeing the tomb of your grandfather, you have become eager for him.'

They replied, '*No, it is not so. Our mother Fatimah has passed away.'*

Imam Ali ('a) was devastated by the news and it shook his whole being. He said, *'O daughter of Muhammad! From whom shall we seek*

comfort? I used to derive comfort from your presence. Now, after you, who can comfort me?'

Immediately, he hastened to his house while his tears flowed from his eyes heavily. When he saw the mortal remains of the Prophet's beloved daughter, the following couplets came on his lips,

For every friendship, there is separation.

Verily, it is that I have lost Fatimah after the Prophet, it proves that no companionship is everlasting.

Cries prevailed in Al-Madinah and people rushed towards Imam Ali's house to pay condolence for the passing away of the Prophet's daughter, because by the passing away of her, the last pillar of Prophethood had gone. The passing away of Lady Fatimah ('a) reminded people of the love and kindness of the Holy Prophet (S) for her.

Besides, they hurried to the Imam's house in order to win the opportunity of participation in the funeral ceremonies of Lady Fatimah ('a), especially after they had not considered their Prophet's will to them with regard to his household.

Imam Ali ('a) asked Salman to inform the people that the burial of the Prophet's daughter had been postponed until night falls. Hence, people left.

'A'ishah, the Prophet's widow, came forward and entered the Imam's house to see for the last time the Prophet's daughter. However, Asma' stopped her saying, 'She had told us not to allow anyone to her'' 86

When a part of the night passed, Imam Ali ('a) arose and gave the funeral bathing to the purified body. Asma', Al-Hasan, Al-Husayn, and Lady Zaynab were with him and his heart was drowned in a deep sorrow. After he shrouded the dead body of Lady Fatimah ('a), he called his children, who were not yet sati-

ated with the love of their mother, so that they might see her for the last time while earth was shaking with their lamentations'

After the farewell, Imam Ali ('a) knotted the shroud and when the last part of the night arrived, he arose and performed the ritual Funeral Prayer for Lady Fatimah's dead body.

Then, he asked some persons from Banu-Hashim his relatives and some close companions to carry the blessed body to the eternal place of repose. Except for his trusted confidants and family members, none else was informed about this. Then, he placed the body in the grave and poured dust upon it. He stood beside the grave and tears flowed from his eyes with such propensity that the ground became wet with them. He uttered the following words describing his shock and grief:

O Prophet of Allah, peace be upon you from me and from your daughter who has come to you and who has hastened to meet you. O Prophet of Allah, my patience about your chosen (daughter) has been exhausted, and my power of endurance has weakened, except that I have ground for consolation in having endured the great hardship and heart-rending event of your separation. I laid you down in your grave when your last breath had passed (when your head was) between my neck and chest.

Verily, we belong to Allah; and to Him shall we return.

Now, the trust has been returned and what had been given has been taken back. As to my grief, it knows no bounds, and as to my nights. They will remain sleepless until Allah chooses for me the house in which you are now residing.

Certainly, your daughter would apprise you of the joining together of your people for oppressing her. You ask her in detail and get all the news about the position. This has happened when a long time had not elapsed and your remembrance had not disappeared. My salutation be on you both, the salutation of a grief stricken not a disgusted or hateful person; for if I go away it is not because I am weary (of you), and if I stay it is not due to lack of belief in what Allah has promised the steadfast. 87

These statements are full of grief and deep sorrow and they complain to the Holy Prophet (S) about the pains and afflictions that befell his beloved daughter. Imam Ali (‘a) requested the Messenger of Allah (S) to inquire from his daughter directly about the tortures she had to bear in the short period she lived after his passing away.

In the same way, Imam Ali (‘a) announced his personal grief at the passing away of the Prophet’s beloved daughter, because it was such a terrible tragedy for him that the flames of grief were never to cool for him until he meets the Lord.

The Holy Imam (‘a) came away from the grave of Lady Fatimah (‘a) not due to his desire to leave her or something detestable. He did so in order to promote the Islamic teachings that emphasized patience at every tragedy.

The Imam (‘a) returned home in remorse, looking at his children weeping severely in the sorrow of their mother and this scene renewed his own grief. He preferred to keep away from the people and not to participate in any of their activities, because they had turned away from him.

Hence, he decided to leave them on their own and they did not involve him in any of their affairs. However, when they would be too helpless to solve the big problems they had to encounter, they were compelled to rush to Imam Ali (‘a) to benefit from his knowledge.

Officials and governors of Abu-Bakr

The official machinery of Abu-Bakr worked according to the advice of ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab, because he had the trust of Abu-Bakr in matters of external and internal programs of the regime. No decision was ever taken and no official was ever appointed without the consent of ‘Umar.

At the position of governorship of various areas and provinces, he appointed only those whom he considered loyal to the regime. If he even slightly doubted the loyalty of any person, he did not entrust him with even the most minor government post.

In brief, the offices of Abu-Bakr's government were not occupied by any person who showed even slight loyalty to or love for Imam Ali ('a).

Historians mentioned that Abu-Bakr deposed Khalid ibn Sa'id ibn Al-'As from the commandership of the army that had been dispatched for the conquest of Syria only because this man showed loyalty to Imam Ali ('a)- a fact to which 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab had paid attention and thus advised Abu-Bakr to depose Khalid although he had all the necessary qualifications to lead an army.

However, Khalid stood in line with Imam Ali ('a) and opposed Abu- Bakr's having been selected as the successor to the Holy Prophet (S) in that inauspicious Saqifah. 88

In addition, Abu-Bakr did not consider any person from the Banu-Hashim clan for any sort of post, and 'Umar, in his conversation with Al-'Abbas, revealed the real cause of this deprivation: it was that he feared that in case he died and one belonging to the Banu-Hashim became a ruler in part of the Islamic lands, an absolutely undesirable condition would develop in the matter of caliphate. 89

In the same way, he deprived the Ansar of holding any governmental posts, due to their excessive leanings towards Imam Ali ('a). However, the majority of officials and deputy governors of the regime of Abu-Bakr belonged to the Banu-Umayyah clan. Some of them were as follows:

1. Abu-Sufyan: He was appointed as the governor of the area consisting of the farthest borders of Al-Hijaz up to the last borders of Najran. 90

2. Yazid ibn Abi-Sufyan: He was appointed as the deputy governor of Syria. 91 Historians say that Abu-Bakr saw Yazid off to the outskirts of Al-Madinah. After his death, the governorship of Syria was given to Mu'awiyah, Yazid's brother.

3. 'Attab ibn Usayd: Abu-Bakr appointed him as the governor of Makkah. 92

4. 'Uthman ibn Abi'l-'As: He was designated as the governor of Al-Ta'if. 93

Since that day, the star of the Umayyad household began to ascend and they occupied a high status in the Islamic state.

Observers have expressed amazement at the policy of Abu-Bakr to remove the Banu-Hashim individuals from any official position and, instead, shower all kinds of favor on the members of the Banu-Umayyah who had opposed the Holy Prophet (S) and confronted Imam Ali ('a) in every situation.

Shaykh Abdullah Al-'Ala'ili, an Egyptian scholar, says: The actual winners in the government of Abu-Bakr were the Umayyad folks rather than the people of Taym, Abu-Bakr's own clan. In other words, only the Umayyad clan derived all the benefits of this government; they shaped the government according to their ways and politics and they considered favoritism and partiality as a norm while they were distant from ruling, as Al-Maqrizi has stated in his book entitled Al-Niza' wa'l-Takhasum. 94

Diplomatic capability and skills in the fields of administration and government were available in numerous people from the Muhajirun and the Ansar among the companions of the Holy Prophet (S) and it would have been best for Abu-Bakr if they had been entrusted with government posts while the Umayyad clan should have been kept away from official posts so that the Muslim community would have remained safe from their intrigues and mischief.

Economic policies of Abu-Bakr

Before we speak about the economic policies of Abu-Bakr, we would like to discuss in brief the economic system devised by Islam, which was aimed at eradicating poverty, enmity, deprivation, and initiating a economic progress so that all people are able to live a life of economic prosperity in such a way that they do not have to face any sort of financial crises.

The most important principle advocated by Islam was that the ruler must observe absolute precaution with regard to public funds. They were under no circumstance allowed to take anything from the public property and they were not permitted to spend any of the public funds for strengthening their rule and their personal power.

The general aim of this principle was to establish equality among Muslims and the ruler had no right to prefer some people to others, because such a thing would have given rise to class difference and it would have created divisions in the general economy; and the society would have become fraught with numerous illnesses and calamities.

Historians say that Abu-Bakr, in distribution of public funds among the Muslims, observed equity and in this field he did not deviate from the Prophet's practice. However, some instances are opposed to this fact, because, first of all, from the charity funds he controlled, he spent a considerable amount to purchase the loyalty of Abu-Sufyan. 95

He also distributed a part of the public funds among the Muhajirun and the Ansar, and sent an amount through Zayd ibn Thabit to a lady from the Banu-'Adi clan.

This lady was amazed at this; so, she asked, 'What is this?' They replied, 'It is a share that Abu-Bakr has dedicated to women.'

She said, 'Are you bribing me for religion? By Allah, I shall not accept anything from it. Return it to him.'96

These were some other objections that critics of the economic policies of Abu-Bakr have stated.

- 1. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 9:22-23.
- 2. i.e. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talibwhose mother is Fatimah bint Asad.
- 3. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah.
- 4. Ibn Al-A'rabi, Mu'jam Al-Shuyukh 4:16.
- 5. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad.
- 6. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 2:222; Tarikh At-Tabari 3:307.
- 7. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 2:222.
- 8. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 2:224.
- 9. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:178.
- 10. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 2:29.
- 11. Tarikh At-Tabari 3:62.
- 12. Abd Al-kusayn Sharaf Al-Din, Al-Na•• wa'l-Ijtihad, pp. 7.
- 13. Muhammad Al-Gilani, Athar Al-Tashayyu' fi'l-Shi'r Al-'Arabi (The Impact of Shi'ism on Arabic Poetry), pp. 5.
- 14. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 5:12.
- 15. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:8.
- 16. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:5.
- 17. Al-Zubayr ibn Bakkar, Al-Muwaffaqiyyat, pp. 80; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al- Balaghah 6:8.
- 18. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 6:8.
- 19. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 217.
- 20. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 20:298.
- 21. Taym is one of the lowliest clans of Quraysh to which Abu-Bakr belonged.
- 22. Abu'l-Faraj Al-Isfahani, Al-Aghani 6:356.
- 23. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 2:220.
- 24. 'Adi is the other lowly clan of Quraysh to which 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab belonged.

- 25. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 6:7.
- 26. Sahih Al-Bukhari 2:362.
- 27. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 6:10-1.
- 28. Al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam Al-Nubala' 3:341.
- 29. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:4.
- 30. Dr. Taha Husayn, Aliyyun wa-Banuh (Ali and his Sons), pp. 19.
- 31. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 2:10.
  Historicists and narrators have unanimously reported that 'Umar threatened to set Imam Ali's house on fire if he would refuse to pay allegiance to Abu-Bakr. Celebrating this incident, Hafis Ibrahim, a modern Egyptian poet, composed these poetic verses:
  Once, Ali received a word from 'Umar; how noble the addressee was, and how great the addresser was:
  'I will set your house on fire and I will not leave any single item unburned therein, if you do not pay homage; even though the daughter of the Chosen Prophet is there.' Other than Abu-Hafs ('Umar), who else could say such a word in the face of the hero and protector of the descendants of 'Adnan (i.e. the Arabs)?

  This incident has also been mentioned in many reference books, some of which are as follows: Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:12; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:34; Tarikh At-Tabari 3:202; Tarikh Abi'l-Fida' 1:156; Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:105; Abu-'Ubayd, Al-Amwal, pp. 131; Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 1:414; Abd Al-Fattah Abd Al-Maqsud, Al-Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib1:213; 'Umar Risa Kahhalah, A'lam Al-Nisa' 3:205.

- 32. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:11.
- 33. The details of this tradition, which is known as Hadith Kisa', are as follows: Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a) reported the following:
  One day, my father the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his Household, visited me, 'Peace be upon you, O

Fatimah!' he said.
'Peace be upon you, too.' I answered.
'I feel some fatigue in my body,' he said to me, and I answered, 'I pray Allah to protect you, O father, against fatigue.'
'Fatimah,' he ordered, 'bring me the Yemeni cloak and cover me with it.'

I brought him the Yemeni cloak and covered him with it. I then kept on looking at his face, which glittered like a moon at the night of its fullness and perfection. No more than a while passed when my son Al-Hasan came in, 'Peace be upon you, mother!' he greeted.
'Peace be upon you, too, O delight of my eye and fruit of my heart!' I replied.
'O mother,' he said, 'I can smell a pleasing scent as if it is the scent of my grandfather the
Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his Household.'
'Yes, it is,' I answered, 'Your grandfather is now under the cloak.'
Al-Hasan moved towards the cloak and said, 'Peace be upon you, O grandfather, Allah's
Messenger. Will you allow me to be with you under this cloak?
My father replied, .Peace be upon you too, my son and director of my Pond. I allow you...
Al-Hasan then went under the cloak with his grandfather.

No more than another while passed before my son Al-Husayn came in, 'Peace be upon you, mother!' he greeted.
'Peace be upon you too, O my son, delight of my eye, and fruit of my heart,' I replied.
'O Mother,' he said, 'I can smell a pleasing scent as if it is the scent of my grandfather the
Messenger of Allah.'
'Yes,' I answered, 'Your grandfather and your bother are under the cloak.'

Al-Husayn then approached towards the cloak and said, 'Peace be upon you, O grandfather! Peace be upon you, O he whom Allah has chosen! Will you allow me to be with both of you under the cloak?'

My father replied, 'Peace be upon you too, O my son and intercessor of my people. I allow you.'
Al-Husayn then went with them under the cloak.
At the same time, Abu'l-Hasan Ali ibn Abi Talib came in, 'Peace be upon you, daughter of Allah's Messenger,' he greeted.
'Peace be upon you too, O Abu'l-Hasan and Leader of the Believers,' I replied.
He then said, 'Fatimah, I can smell a pleasing scent, as if it is the scent of my brother and cousin the Messenger of Allah.'

'Yes,' I answered, 'He is there with your two sons under the cloak.'
Ali moved towards the cloak and said, 'Peace be upon you, O Allah's Messenger! Will you allow me to be with you under the cloak?'
My father replied, 'Peace be upon you too, O brother, successor, vicegerent, and bearer of my Pennon. I allow you.'
Ali thus went with them under the cloak.
I then came towards the cloak and said, 'Peace be upon you father, O Allah's Messenger. Will you allow me to be with you under the cloak?'
My father replied, 'Peace be upon you too, my daughter and part of my flesh. I allow you.'
I thus went with them under the cloak.

When all of us sat under the cloak, my father the Messenger of Allah took hold of the two edges of the cloak with one hand, pointed to the sky with his right hand, and prayed, 'O Allah! These are my true household, my unique people, and my kin. Their flesh is my flesh, their blood is my blood, whatever causes them pain causes me pain too, and whatever sad-

dens them saddens me too. I am at war against whoever wages war against them, at peace with whoever is at peace with them, the enemy of whoever shows enmity towards them, and I love whoever loves them. They are part of me and I am part of them. Therefore (please) shower on me and them Your blessings, benedictions, mercy, forgiveness, and pleasure; and remove from them filth, and purify them with thorough purifying.'

Meanwhile, Allah the Almighty and All-majestic said, 'O My angels and inhabitants of My heavens! Verily, I have not created any well-established sky, extended land, glowing moon, shining sun, revolving planet, flowing ocean, or moving on ark except for the love of these five (individuals) who are now under the cloak.'
Gabriel the Honest Archangel asked, 'O my Lord! Who are those under the cloak?'
The Almighty and All-majestic Lord answered, 'They are the household of Prophethood and the core of the Message. They are namely Fatimah, her father, her husband, and her two sons.'
'O my Lord,' Gabriel asked, 'Will You allow me to descend to the earth to be the sixth of them?'

Allah the Almighty and All-majestic said, 'Yes, I allow you.'
Gabriel the Honest Archangel descended, 'Peace be upon you, O Allah's Messenger!' he greeted, 'The Most High and All-high (Lord) conveys to you His greeting, expresses His special benedictions and honoring to you, and says, 'By My Almightiness and My Majesty I take this oath: I have not created any well-established sky, extended land, glowing moon, shining sun, revolving planet, flowing ocean, or moving on ark except for your sake and for your love.' He has then allowed me to join you (under this cloak). Will you, O Allah's Messenger, allow me?'

Allah's Messenger said, 'Peace be upon you, O trustee of Allah's Revelations. Yes, I allow you.'
So, Gabriel joined us under the cloak. He thus said to my father, 'Allah has revealed to you saying, 'Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House, and to purify you a thorough purifying.''
Ali then said to my father, 'O Allah's Messenger! Please tell me; what is the value of this gathering of us under this cloak in the sight of Allah?'

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his Household, said, 'I swear this by Him Who has sent me with the truth as Prophet and chosen me, as holding communion, to convey the Message; whenever the tale of this gathering of us is mentioned in an assembly of the people of the earth in which a group of our adherents and adorers are present, the (divine) mercy shall certainly be poured down on them and the angels shall certainly surround them, asking forgiveness for them until they depart.'
Ali, peace be upon him, commented, 'Then, by Allah I swear it; we have won. So have our adherents. I swear it by the Lord of the Ka'bah.'

'O Ali!' my father Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his Household, added, 'I swear this by Him Who has sent me with the truth as Prophet and chosen me, as holding communion, to convey the Message; whenever the tale of this gathering of us is mentioned in an assembly of the people of the earth in which a group of our adherents and adorers are present and among them there is a distressed one, Almighty Allah shall certainly release him from distress, or there is among them an aggrieved one, Almighty Allah shall certainly relieve him from grief, or there is among them one who needs a request to be granted, Almighty Allah shall certainly grant him his request.'

Ali, peace be upon him, said, 'Then, we have won and attained pleasure. I swear it by Allah. So have our adherents; they have won and attained pleasure in this world and in the Hereafter. I swear it by the Lord of the Ka'bah.'
This incident has been also reported in other abbreviated forms in the majority of reference books of Prophetic traditions.

- 34. The incident of the sun's recourse for Imam Ali ('a) has been mentioned by reference books of Sunni and Shi'ite scholars alike, such as Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 1:485 (as quoted from Abu-Bakr Al-Warraq in his book man-rawa-radda'l-shams); Al-kafis Al-Suyuti, Al-La'ali' Al-Ma•nu'ah 2:175, Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah 6:80; Lisan Al-Mizan 5:76; Al-tahhawi, Mushkil Al-Athar 2:11; Al-Mannawi, Fays Al-Qadir 5:440.

  Asma' bint 'Umays narrates: One day, the Prophet (S) slept keeping his head on the lap of Ali ('a). The sun had set and Ali ('a) could not perform his afternoon prayer. When the Prophet (S) woke up, he said, 'O Allah! Ali had always implicitly obeyed You and Your Prophet. Please order the sun to return.'

  Asma' says: By God, the sun that had set rose again spreading its rays over every hill and dale. Ali ('a) got up, performed the ritual ablution and completed his afternoon prayer after completion of which the sun set once again.'

- 35. This Prophetic tradition has been mentioned in many reference books of Hadith. See, for instance: Al-Qanaduzi, Yanabi' Al-Mawaddah, pp. 16; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:100.
- 36. Explaining this holy verse: 'And warn your closest relatives,' Ahmad ibn Hanbal, in Musnad Ahmad, and Al-Tha'labi, in his book of Tafsir, have mentioned that the Holy Prophet (S) gathered his closest relatives and asked, 'Who will guarantee the payment of my debts and fulfill my prom-

ises; and he shall be with me in Paradise and my representative among my family members?' Imam Ali ('a), but none else, said, 'I will, O Allah's Messenger.'

- 37. The famous tradition of the roasted bird has been mentioned in almost all of the reference
books of traditions in various forms, one of which is as follows:
Anas ibn Malik narrates: When Ummu-Ayman presented a tastily cooked dish of a bird to the Holy Prophet (S), he prayed God, saying, 'O God, please send one who is dearest to You so that I may share this tasty dish with him.' Just then, Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) entered and the Prophet (S) said, 'Come join me [and share this feast].' See also Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat Al-Sahabah 4:30; Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi,Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:130.
- 38. One day, the Holy Prophet (S) was at Ummu-Salamah's chamber when Imam Ali ('a) visited him. The Holy Prophet (S) thus said to Ummu-Salamah, 'This is the killer of the breakers of the pledge, the wrongdoers, and the apostates after me.' See: Muhibb Al-Din Al-
tabari, Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah fi Fada'il Al-'Asharah, pp. 320.
- 39. Many reports have it that the Holy Prophet (S), addressing his companions, said, 'The most knowledgeable of all of you in judicature is Ali ibn Abi Talib.' See: Ibn Abd Al- Barr, Al-Istiab 2:461.
- 40. In his book entitled Al-Risalah Al-Muwaddahah, Al-Musaffar ibn Ja'far ibn Al-Husayn,one of the mentors of Ibn Jarir At-Tabari in the field of transmitting the Prophetic traditions, says,

  Muhammad ibn Hammam has reported to us on the authority of Ali ibn Al-'Abbas and Muhammad ibn Al-Husayn ibn Hafs on the authority of Isma'il ibn Ishaq on the authority of Yahya ibn Salim on the authority of Sabbah ibn Yahya on the authority of Al-'Ala' ibn Al- Musayyab on the authority of Abu-Dawud on the authority of Buraydah Al-Aslami who said: In the presence of Allah's Messenger (S), we used to

greet Ali ibn Abi Talib as follows: Peace and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you, O Leader of the Believers. He would then answer back our greetings.

'Amr ibn Husayb reports: One day, my brother Buraydah was in the presence of the Messenger of Allah ('a) when Abu-Bakr entered and greeted him. The Holy Prophet (S) ordered Abu-Bakr, 'Go and greet the Leader of the Believers.' 'O Allah's Messenger, who is the leader of the believers?' Asked Abu-Bakr. The Holy Prophet (S) answered, 'He is Ali ibn Abi Talib.' 'Is this a command of Allah and His Prophet?' Abu-Bakr further asked. 'Yes, it is,' answered the Holy Prophet (S). Then, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab entered and greeted the Holy Prophet (S), who ordered him of the same. 'Umar, too, asked the same questions of Abu-Bakr, and the Holy Prophet (S) gave the same answers.

- 41. For details, see these reference books: Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al- Sahihayn 3: 111; Muhibb Al-Din At-Tabari, Al-Riyad Al-Nadirah fi Fada'il Al-'Asharah 2:237 & Dhakha'ir Al-'Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi'l-Qurba, pp. 72.
- 42. For his being the Holy Prophet's brother, cousin, son-in-law, and his two grandson's father, Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) is the closest to the Holy Prophet (S), since none else had such standings.
- 43. A golden monetary unit of that time.
- 44. One day, Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a) asked her husband Imam Ali ('a) to borrow an amount of food that would allay their hunger. When he went out, Imam Ali ('a) could not find anybody to offer this question to him. However, he could pick up one dinar. After he had announced for that dinar, he could not find its owner. At home, Lady Fatimah ('a) asked him to borrow that dinar and when its owner would show up, they would give back a dinar to him instead. So, the Imam ('a) took the dinar and went to the market place where he found a man selling food. With that dinar, Imam Ali ('a) got food, but the owner of the food refused to take its value.

On the second day, Imam Ali (‘a) went out to the market place to buy some food. Just like the last day, the owner of the food refused to take its value from Imam Ali (‘a). The same thing reoccurred on the third day. Finding this strange, Imam Ali (‘a) hurried to the Holy Prophet (S) and told him the whole story. Here, the Holy Prophet (S) informed him that the seller of the food was none but Archangel Gabriel. Reference: Al-Khawarizmi, Al-Manaqib, pp. 224.

- 45. See the details of this Prophetic tradition in Fara'id Al-Simtayn by Al-Hamawini Vol. 2, Section 8.
- 46. Known as Sadd Al-Abwab, the issue of closing all the doors that took to the Holy Prophet’s Mosque except the door of Ali’s house is as follows:
  The Holy Prophet (S), until after six months after his arrival in Al-Madinah, stayed at the home of Abu-Ayyub Al-Ansari. During this period, there was neither any specific place for congregational prayers nor a permanent place of residence for him. He felt it necessary to construct the mosque along with a house for the family. There was a vacant piece of land near the house of Abu-Ayyub Al-Ansari where some animals used to be penned. The Prophet (S) liked this land for building the mosque. The land belonged to the people of Banu’l-Najjar from which family Abd Al-MutTalibb’s mother came. The Prophet (S) wanted to buy away the land but the owners refused to accept any money for it and said that instead of material value they would prefer to get reward from Almighty Allah.

  The Prophet (S) did not like to take the land without cost because it belonged to two orphans whose names were Sahl and Suhayl and were under the guardianship of Asad ibn Zurarah. The Prophet (S) bought the land through Asad, had it leveled, and started the construction of the mosque on it, which was ready in the shape of a four walled enclosure in a few days. Then, putting on wooden pillars and thatch, one part of the enclosure was covered to provide shade from the sun. On one side of the mosque, rooms were built for the

ladies, which were increased later on, as the need arose. In the middle of these rooms, the house of Ali (‘a) was constructed.

The Muhajirun, coming from Makkah too, started building their quarters on the other periphery of the mosque. They had doors opening towards the mosque and they used to enter the precincts through these doors. The Holy Prophet (S) thought that this arrangement was not proper for the sanctity of the mosque; he therefore ordered that the doors opening into the mosque be sealed and the houses to have doors at the back. He wanted them to enter the mosque only through the main door. He permitted only the door of Imam Ali’s house to open towards the mosque. Al-Tirmidhi writes: ‘The Prophet (S) ordered that except the door of Ali’s house, all other doors to be sealed.’ [Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 2:214]

Some persons did not like this arrangement. Certain brows frowned, some mouths opened, and the gossip mill started working. The Prophet (S) heard about the feelings of the companions. He therefore gathered them and said:
‘I have neither sealed your doors nor allowed Ali’s door to remain open. It is Allah Who has ordered the sealing of your doors and leaving Ali’s door open.’ [Al-Nassa'i, Khasa'is Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 37]

Certain relatives of the Holy Prophet (S) too wished that the doors of their houses would be kept opened towards the mosque; therefore, they complained about showing partiality towards Ali (‘a), he had allowed him this privilege and refused them the facility. However, the Holy Prophet (S) said:
‘I neither sent you out nor did I allow Ali to stay. It is Allah Who has kept you out and Ali to stay in.’ [Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:117]

‘Umar too considered this a singular privilege for Ali (‘a) and used to say:
‘’Ali ibn Abi Talib enjoyed three such special privileges that if

I had had even one, it would have meant to me more than owning red-haired camels.' When asked what these privileges were, he said: 'The first was that he was married to Fatimah the daughter of Muhammad (S); secondly, he had the honor of residing inside the mosque with the Prophet (S) and thus the matters that were legitimate for the Prophet (S) became legitimate for him, and; thirdly, he was given the Standard on the Day of Khaybar!' [Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:125]

- 47. Mujahid narrates that Imam Ali ('a) said, 'None except me practiced in the past nor shall anyone ever act upon this verse:

  'O you who believe, when you consult the Messenger, then offer something in charity before your consultation. That is better for you and purer. (58:12)'

  The verse was originally mandatory but was later repealed. [Fada'il Al-Khamsah fi Al-Sihah Al-Sittah 1:293]
  Mujahid narrates: People were forbidden from conferring with the Holy Prophet (S) in private without first paying a donation. Ali ibn Abi Talib was the only person to pay one dinar conferring with the Holy Prophet (S) in private.

- 48. See the details in these reference books: Muhibb Al-Din At-Tabari, Dhakha'ir Al-'Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi'l-Qurba, pp. 68-9; Sibt Ibn Al-Jawzi, Tadhkirat Al-Khawass, pp. 228.
- 49. At-Tabrisi, Al-Ihtijaj 1:157-84.
- 50. Ibn Tayfur, Balaghat Al-Nisa', pp. 23; 'Umar Rida Kahhalah, A'lam Al-Nisa' 3:219-20.
- 51. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Letter No. 45.
- 52. Muhibb Al-Din At-Tabari, Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah fi Fada'il Al-'Asharah 1:139; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:17; Al-Khawarizmi, Maqtal Al-Husayn 1:93; Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib2:172. Ibn kajar Al-'Asqalani, in Al-Isabah fi Tamyiz Al-Sahabah 2:15, states: 'This protestation was made by Imam Al-Husayn.'

Ibn Hajar, in Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah, pp. 105, says: 'In the book of Al-Sibyan that is printed in the margin of Nur Al-Absar, pp. 125, it is mentioned that Al-Hasan said these words to Abu-Bakr, and Al-Husayn said similar words to 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab.'

- 53. At-Tabrisi, Al-Ihtijaj 1:42.
- 54. At-Tabrisi, Al-Ihtijaj 1:43.
- 55. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal, pp. 774.
- 56. At-Tabrisi, Al-Ihtijaj 1:43.
- 57. Tarikh Abi'l-Fida' 1:159.
- 58. 'Abbas Al-Qummi, Al-Kuna wa'l-Alqab 1:13.
- 59. 'Abbas Al-Qummi, Al-Kuna wa'l-Alqab 1:13.
- 60. Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi, Hadhihi Hiya Al-Shi'ah, pp. 96.
- 61. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 19:174.
- 62. At-Tabrisi, Al-Ihtijaj 1:103.
- 63. Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi, Hayat Al-Imam Al-Hasan 1:197.
- 64. At-Tabrisi, Al-Ihtijaj 1:102.
- 65. Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi, Hayat Al-Imam Al-Hasan 1:167.
- 66. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:106.
- 67. Sahih Al-Bukhari 2:132.
- 68. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab 4:366.
- 69. Sahih Al-Bukhari 1:357.
- 70. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 3:196.
- 71. Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 2:41; Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al- Sahihayn 3:160.
- 72. Al-Zamakhshari, Tafsir Al-Kashshaf 2:583.
- 73. Sahih Al-Bukhari 3:36; Sahih Muslim 2:72.
- 74. Ibn tayfur, Balaghat Al-Nisa', pp. 12-9; 'Umar Risa Kahhalah, A'lam Al-Nisa' 3:208.
- 75. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 3:135; Tarikh At-Tabari 3:52.
- 76. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:14; 'Umar Risa Kahhalah, A'lam Al-Nisa' 3:1214; Abd Al-Fattah Abd Al-Maqsud, Al-Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib 1:217.
- 77. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:153; Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat Al-Sahabah 5:522; Ibn kajar, Tahdhib Al-

Tahdhib 12:241; Al-Dhahabi, Mizan Al-I'tidal 2:72; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-Ummah 6:219; Ahmad ibn Abdullah At-Tabari, Dhakha'ir Al-'Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi'l-Qurba, pp. 39; Al-Khawarizmi, Maqtal a-Talibbiyyin 1:52.

- 78. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 3.
- 79. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 26.
- 80. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:12.
- 81. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 73.
- 82. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 2:131.
- 83. Sunan Ibn Majah, pp. 18; Al-Qastalani, Al-Mawahib Al-Ludaniyyah 2:281.
- 84. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:95.
- 85. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:162.
- 86. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 3:365.
- 87. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 201.
- 88. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:352.
- 89. Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 5:135.
- 90. Al-Buladhari, Futuh Al-Buldan, pp. 103.
- 91. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 2:289.
- 92. Ibn Hajar Al-'Asqalani, Al-Isabah fi Tamyiz Al-Sahabah 2:444.
- 93. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 2:421.
- 94. .Abdull¡h al-.Al¡'il¢, al-Im¡m al-°usayn, pp. 191.
- 95. Tarikh At-Tabari 3:3
- 96. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:53.

Entrusting caliphate to 'Umar

Abu-Bakr's rule did not last for a long time. Hardly two years had passed when illness beset him and he decided to transfer the caliphate to his confidant and supporter 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab. However, this was severely opposed by many companions. Among them, Talhah addressed him saying, 'What would you say to your Lord when you are making a hard-hearted and ill-tem-

pered man as a ruler over us? Everyone hates him and all people are fed up with him.'1

Abu-Bakr could do nothing more than keeping silent, while Talhah proceeded with his objection, saying, 'O successor of Allah's Messenger, we did not bear that ill-tempered man in your lifetime, while you used to restrain him. Then, what shall our condition be when you die and he becomes the caliph?'2

However, Abu-Bakr did not pay the least heed to Talhah's words.

Numerous persons from the Muhajirun and the Ansar rushed to Abu-Bakr and announced, 'We see that you have appointed 'Umar as the ruler over us while you know about him and you are aware of his ill deeds among us and that was in a period when you were among us. Then, what will happen to us when you are no more among us? You are proceeding to meet Allah the Blessed and the Sublime. What will you say in reply?'

Abu-Bakr replied, 'If the Almighty asks me, I will say that I have appointed as caliph over them one who was the best of them in my view!'3

According to many scholars, it would have been better if Abu-Bakr had taken into consideration the feelings of the overwhelming majority of Muslims and he should only have followed the opinion of the majority. After consulting the experienced persons, Abu-Bakr should have formed a consultative committee so that it might select one as a caliph.

However, he surrendered to his personal feelings that were imbued with an unprecedented loyalty to, love, and regard for 'Umar. In order to gauge the view of the people, he asked Mawqib Al-Dusi, 'What do the people say regarding the appointment of 'Umar as the next caliph?'

He replied, 'Some oppose it and some support it.'

Abu-Bakr further inquired, 'Are those who oppose more or those who support it?'

He replied, 'Those who oppose it are in majority.'[4]

Thus, Abu-Bakr ignored the opposition of the majority to his appointment of 'Umar as the next caliph and he imposed him upon them against their wills. He did not leave them free to choose a candidate for caliphate.

Anyway, 'Umar always stuck to Abu-Bakr during the latter's final illness lest someone might try to influence his decision.

'Umar further strengthened the statement and view of Abu-Bakr with regard to his appointing him as caliph, saying, 'O people, listen to and obey the commands of the successor of Allah's Messenger.'[5]

Abu-Bakr commanded 'Uthman ibn 'Affan to write down a document ensuring the appointment of 'Umar as the next caliph. In response, 'Uthman wrote down the following:

'This is the will of Abu-Bakr the son of Abu-Quhafah. It is his last will in his lifetime while he is leaving this world and receiving the other world. Know that I have appointed 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab as the next caliph upon you. Thus, if you find him equitable, it is what I expect and hope from him. If he does otherwise and changes it, I have only intended good and I am not aware of the unseen: ''And they who act unjustly shall know to what final place of turning they shall turn back.''[6]

However, no one had the dare to say that Abu-Bakr was hallucinating! No one prevented Abu-Bakr from writing down that document about appointing 'Umar as the next ruler, like what they did when they prevented the Holy Prophet (S) from writing a document about appointing Imam Ali ('a) as his successor to the position of leadership, claiming that the Holy Prophet (S) was hallucinating! [7]

Abu-Bakr signed the document and gave it to 'Umar, who took it and rushed to the mosque in order to read it to the public. A person, who was amazed at his condition, asked, 'O Abu-Hafs! What is written in this document?'

'Umar expressed ignorance about its content, but he emphasized that it was for his personal benefit. He said, 'I do not know! However, I will be the first to listen and obey!'

The man glanced at 'Umar, realized the reality of the matter, and said, 'However, by Allah, I know what it contains. Last year, you made him the ruler, and he is giving you the sovereignty this year!'8

'Umar rushed to the mosque and read the commandment to the people. This way, caliphate became established for him without any problem or opposition. This matter aggrieved Imam Ali ('a) very much. Describing his distress, Imam Ali ('a) later said,

When the first one (i.e. Abu-Bakr) went his way, handed over the caliphate to the son of Al-Khattab after himself.

The Imam then quoted Al-A'sha's poetic verse:

My days are now passed on the camel's back (in difficulty) while there were days (of ease) when I enjoyed the company of Jabir's brother kayyan.

It is strange that during his lifetime, he wished to be released from the caliphate but he confirmed it for the other one after his death. No doubt these two shared its udders strictly among themselves' 9

The above words describe the level of sorrow and pain of Imam Ali ('a) regarding the trespassing of his rights and their removing him from his position. This position of succeeding the Holy Prophet (S) was usurped frequently by these men; it was once allotted to the Banu-Taym clan and then to the Banu-'Adi clan. They

completely disregarded the struggle of Imam Ali (‘a) in support of Islam and they ignored his status with the Holy Prophet (S).

The illness of Abu-Bakr took a serious turn and it herded him towards his imminent end where every man has to ultimately go. He confessed of his regret and pain regarding his unjust acts towards the beloved daughter of the Holy Prophet (S)

In the last moments of his life, his daughter ‘A'ishah came to visit him. She found him in the throes of death; so, she said this poetic verse:

By your life (I swear), the wealth of one does not benefit one who is involved in the throes of death.

Abu-Bakr became angry and said to her, ‘You should have rather said this:

‘And the stupor of death will come in truth. That is what you were trying to escape.’’10

Not much time passed but that Abu-Bakr reached his imminent end. His friend ‘Umar performed his funeral rites; he gave him the funeral bathing and performed the funeral prayer on his dead body. Then, he buried him in the house of the Holy Prophet (S) and attached his grave to the Holy Prophet’s grave.

Shi’ite theologians, criticizing this issue, say: If this house was part of the heritage of the Holy Prophet-since there is no tradition stating that the Holy Prophet (S) had bequeathed the house to his wife ‘A'ishah-then this house must have been possessed by Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' (‘a) and this possession must have then transferred to her husband and children. As a result, the permission of Lady Fatimah’s heirs should have been obtained before burying Abu-Bakr in the place that was owned by them.

Accordingly, Abu-Bakr’s burial in that house was not lawful except with the permission of the Holy Prophet’s Progeny. As for

'A'ishah's permission, it is of no avail according to the Islamic laws of inheritance, because she does not have a share in the inheritance of lands; rather, she is only entitled to a share in the constructed house.

As long as the Holy Prophet's house was added to the public treasury, because Abu-Bakr announced that he had heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying, 'We, the prophets, do not leave any inheritance; rather; we leave only the Book and the Divine Wisdom,' then the permission of all Muslims should have been taken before burying Abu-Bakr's dead body in the Prophet's house. However, the permission of neither the Holy Prophet's heirs nor the Muslims was taken.

To sum it up, the short reign of Abu-Bakr opened the door to the invention of numerous political trends and religious factions. The most awful of all these acts was the keeping away of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) from their right to succeed the Holy Prophet (S), after the Holy Prophet (S), by the command of Almighty Allah, had announced them as the next leaders of this nation.

The members of the Holy Prophet's household were thus removed from the sphere of respect and reverence that the Holy Prophet (S) had designated for them and they were subjected to all sorts of atrocities and hardships while the ruling authorities considered themselves as representatives of the Holy Prophet (S) and thought that they were more qualified for this position than others were.

This controversy of Abu-Bakr with the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) created differences and spread mischief and disunity among Muslims. It also founded backgrounds for such tyrannical dynasties like the Umayyad and the 'Abbasid to rule over Muslims in the name of the Holy Prophet (S) and Islam.

All the persecutions and suppressions that the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and their followers had to encounter during the reigns of the Umayyad and 'Abbasid rulers were originally founded by Abu-

Bakr and ‘Umar when they usurped the Ahl Al-Bayt’s right of holding the position of leadership of the Muslim community.

Of course, the most terrible and most astounding calamity that afflicted the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) all over ages was the massacre of Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) and his family members in Karbala'.

‘Umar’ s reign

Abu-Bakr prepared caliphate after him for ‘Umar and assumed it with utmost ease and facility without the least amount of difficulty or hardship. He caught the rule with a firm grip and administered the government with an iron hand so much so that even the senior Companions could not dare to say anything against him, because, as it is said, his walking stick was more terrible than the sword of Al-Hajjaj (ibn Yusuf Al-Thaqafi, the most tyrannical ruler of Iraq during the reign of Abd Al-Malik ibn Marwan).

Even Ibn ‘Abbas, in spite of his status and lofty position, could not express his view about the legality of the temporary marriage (*mut’ah*) in the lifetime of ‘Umar. Even the family members of ‘Umar, especially his sons, were incapable of having their way with him. Here, we shall discuss some policies of ‘Umar during his reign:

Internal Policies Of ‘Umar

‘Umar tried to impose his influence by force and harshness. Neither his close friends and relations nor were the other people at ease because of ‘Umar’s coarseness and crudeness. Such was the level of his ferocity that a pregnant lady approached him to ask about a particular matter. But she became so much terrorized in his presence that she had miscarriage.11

‘Umar was extremely rude and harsh, especially to one who accorded some importance to himself. Narrators say, ‘One day,

‘Umar was distributing some funds among the people who were crowded around him. Then, Sa’d ibn Abi- Waqqas arrived. Sa’d, one of the prestigious personalities, was well-known for his exploits in the conquest of Persia.

He pushed the people aside and succeeded in reaching to ‘Umar. When ‘Umar saw how Sa’d brought himself to the fore, he sarted thrashing him with his stick, saying, ‘Do you not fear the power of Allah on the earth? I wanted to show you that the power of Allah is also not fearful of you.’

Hence, ‘Umar smashed Sa’d’s supremacy and injured his dignity and self- respect.12

‘Umar had a similar rule and harsh situation with Jabalah ibn Al-Ayham, one of the prominent personalities among the Arabs. When Jabalah and his folks embraced Islam, an event that delighted the Muslims, he came to perform the ritual Hajj pilgrimage in the holy city of Makkah. While he was circumambulating the Holy Ka’bah, a man from the tribe of Fazarah stepped on his lower garment and stopped him. Jabalah was so furious that he slapped the man.

This news reached ‘Umar who had summoned the man of Fazarah and ordered Jabalah to let the man either take revenge or be compensated. In this matter, ‘Umar was very harsh to Jabalah that the man apostatized from Islam and fled to Hercules. Hercules welcomed Jabalah warmly and presented him some gifts. However, Jabalah later on regretted his having abandoned the faith of Islam.

‘Umar had intended to put a chain of camel tethers around the neck of Jabalah in order to humiliate him.

‘Umar’s harshness was not only restricted to his subjects, but he was also harsh with his family members. Historicists say that whenever ‘Umar was infuriated at one of his family members, he

would bite him so heavily causing the hand to bleed; otherwise, fury would not leave him. 13

Describing 'Umar's coarseness, 'Uthman ibn 'Affan said to the Muslims who revolted against him, 'The son of Al-Khattab used to trample you below his feet, hit you with his hands, and humiliate you by his tongue; therefore, you feared and accepted him as your ruler''14

Expressing the suppressive policies of 'Umar and the hardships people had to encounter during his reign, Imam Ali ('a) says,

After that, he (i.e. Abu-Bakr) transferred the caliphate to a harsh condition, (i.e. to 'Umar, who was) rude in speech, unapproachable and full of mistakes. He put forth many excuses. And its owner was like the rider of a ferocious beast that if he pulls at the reins it would rent the mouth of the beast and if he lets him free it would have thrown him into hardships; and by Allah, people fell into mistakes, hardships, indecisiveness and controversies'' 15

This policy was opposed to the practices and policies of the Holy Prophet (S) that were based on lenience, clemency, and avoidance of all forms of violence and coarseness. The Holy Prophet (S) lived among the people with kindness and affection and dealt with them with utmost mercy.

He was for them a loving father and he used to encourage people not to have any fear or reservations from him so much so that a man, once, came to him while he was in a fearful condition. The Holy Prophet (S) told him not to be afraid, saying, 'Indeed, I am a son of a lady from the tribe of Quraysh; she used to eat dried meat.'16

The behavior of the Holy Prophet (S) with his companions was just like the behavior of a brother to his brother. He always hated to be distinguished from them. He participated with them in building the Prophet's Mosque. Addressing the Holy Prophet (S) and praising him for these traits, the Holy Quran says,

Most surely, you conform yourself to sublime morality. (68:4)

In brief, coarseness was never compatible with any of the Holy Prophet's mannerisms that were characterized by high morality and well-regarded politeness.

Placing The Companions Under House Arrest

One of the articles of 'Umar's policy was that he put the Prophet's companions under house arrest and restricted their movements. He did not allow them to leave Al-Madinah without a special permission obtained from him personally. Scholars of Islamic affairs consider this procedure of 'Umar to be against the spirit of Islam, since this religion has guaranteed freedom to all people.

People in Islam are accorded the freedoms of thought, expression, faith, and work. Islam has secured human rights and the Islamic government is duty-bound to support and respect these rights and provide people with freedom. The ruling powers do not have the right to oppose people or to restrict this freedom, subject to the condition that man does not use wrongly this freedom to harm others or create mischief on the earth.

However, Dr. Taha Husayn, trying to justify this procedure of 'Umar, says,

'Umar, by doing so, feared lest these Companions would be exposed to sedition. Hence, he had them under surveillance at Al-Madinah that they would not leave it without his permission. Besides, they were prohibited to go to areas not conquered yet, because he feared that people there would probably become devoted to them and this would cause them to become vain and arrogant. He anticipated bad effects on his government due to such excessive devotion to the Companions.[17]

Actually, this justification is absolutely lacking any impression of sound research and profundity. If the Companions who intended

to travel from Al- Madinah to the newly conquered places had been righteous and religious, they would indeed have proved to be source of true guidance and goodness for the people who were eager to accept Islam.

From this aspect, they would certainly have spread the religious laws and Islamic manners among these people and tried to spread knowledge among them. On the other hand, if these Companions had been seduced by worldly pleasures and deceived by the aspects of the Islamic conquests, then to prevent them from traveling as a custom but not as a religious law would certainly have achieved maintenance of the government and protection of people from being deceived by them.

However, no report has informed that 'Umar prevented some of these Companions and allowed others to leave the capital. Thus, it was natural that this rule imposed by 'Umar was very much unpleasant for the Companions and an obstacle was imposed between them and their freedom.

Officials And Governors Appointed By 'Umar

Patterning after the procedures of Abu-Bakr, 'Umar continued to keep away the members of the Banu-Hashim clan from holding any governmental office and he did not accord them any share in his government. Rather, he confirmed those whom had been appointed by Abu-Bakr and kept them on their former positions.

It is surprising that 'Umar did not give any official position to well-known Companions like Talhah and Al-Zubayr. One day, he was asked, 'You bestowed governorship to Yazid ibn Abi-Sufyan, Sa'id ibn Al-'As, and other persons from the group known as *Al-mu'allafah qulubuhum* (i.e. those non- Muslims whose hearts are made to incline to Islam) from the infidels whom the Holy Prophet (S) set free on the day of the Conquest of Makkah, but you paid no attention to Ali, Al-'Abbas, Al-Zubayr, or Talhah. Why is that?'

'Umar replied, 'As for Ali, he is above such things. As for these people from Quraysh, (i.e. Talhah and Al-Zubayr), I fear that if they go to the cities, they will create corruption therein.'

Commenting on this statement of 'Umar, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid says,

How strange statement this is! If 'Umar anticipated that if he would give governmental offices to these persons, they would seek sovereignty and each one of them would declare himself the absolute ruler, then how did he not anticipate such dangers when he made them among the six persons whom he had nominated to be the next caliphs and whom he had regarded equal to the others in the issue of *shura* (i.e. consultation)? Verily, there is nothing closer to mischief than such a nomination.18

To explain, before his death and in his last will, 'Umar nominated Talhah and Al-Zubayr for the next caliphate and made them members of the so-called shura committee, professing that the Holy Prophet (S) died while he was pleased with them. How is it then possible that persons who enjoy such qualifications can be sources of mischief in the land if they would be given governmental offices?

Supervision Of Governors

'Umar maintained strict supervision over his governors and administrators and he did not appoint anyone for a governmental office before he had had their wealth and property valued. When he dismissed one from such office, he would again have his assets valued. If he then found any increase therein, he would have the half of his wealth confiscated and deposited in the public treasury.19

'Umar appointed Abu-Hurayrah Al-Dusi as the governor of Bahrain. When he was informed that Abu-Hurayrah had misappropriated the wealth of Muslims, he summoned him. When Abu-Hurayrah was present before him, 'Umar scolded him and said,

'You should know that I appointed you as the governor of Bahrain while you did not have slippers to wear. Now it has been reported to me that you have sold some horses for one thousand and six hundred dinars (i.e. golden coins). How did you amass such a fortune?'

Abu-Hurayrah tried to explain the matter, saying, 'We had some horses that multiplied continuously and we received so many successive gifts!'

'Umar did not accept any excuse; rather, he chastised Abu-Hurayrah a great deal, saying, 'I have already specified your income and allowances and this is the excess that you must refund.'

Abu-Hurayrah refused and said, 'You do not have the right to do so.' 'Umar said, 'Yes, by Allah. I will moreover give you pain in your back.' 'Umar became infuriated; he stood up and hit Abu-Hurayrah with his walking stick causing him to bleed. Abu-Hurayrah had no option but to return the money he had misappropriated. So, he said at last, 'I shall return it and present the account to God.'

'Umar, in that same weak logic of his, replied, 'It is in case that it be obtained through lawful means and you have paid it on your own. Have you brought them from the distant areas of Bahrain? People have brought them for you and not for Allah or the Muslims. Umaymah (Abu-Hurayrah's mother) had brought you forth only for grazing donkeys.'[20]

After that, he halved all the assets of Abu-Hurayrah. 'Umar had also confiscated half of the assets of his following officials: (1) Samarah ibn Jundab, (2) 'Asim ibn Qays, (3) Mujashi' ibn Mas'ud, (4) Juz' ibn Mu'awiyah, (5) Al-Hajjaj ibn 'Atiq, (6) Bashir ibn Al-Muhtafaz, (7) Abu- Maryam ibn Muhrish, and (8) Nafi' ibn Al-Harth.

In spite of 'Umar's strict supervision over his officials, continuous complaints reached him and some people complained about these

governors, especially those who were responsible for collecting land taxes.

'Umar dealt strictly with all of his governors except Mu'awiyah ibn Abi- Sufyan. He rather accorded him special honor and did not subject him to any sort of accounting and inspection.

Many complaints reached 'Umar about Mu'awiyah's embezzlement and irresponsible disposition of the public treasury; nevertheless, 'Umar used to find excuses for Mu'awiyah and he would instead praise him, saying, 'You always talk of Khosrow (the king of Persia) and Caesar (the king of Rome) while there is Mu'awiyah among you.'21

Of course, this is in violation of the Prophetic tradition that reads,

Khosrow has perished; and there will be no other Khosrow after him. Similarly, Caesar will soon perish; and there will be no other Caesar after him. I swear this by Allah: the treasures of these two kings will be spent in the cause of Allah.22

'Umar used to defend Mu'awiyah beyond reasonable limits and he never criticized him. Some Companions mentioned to 'Umar that Mu'awiyah was going against the Prophetic practice; he wore silk and brocade and used gold and silver utensils. He never refrained from violating all of the Prophetic traditions.

'Umar objected to and scolded them, saying, 'Leave it! Do not find faults with a young man of Quraysh who smiles even if he is angered and nothing he possesses can be obtained except by means of his pleasure. Besides, nothing can be taken from above his head but that which he himself discards.'23

Historicists say that 'Umar went to greater lengths to elevate the position of Mu'awiyah and imbued him with a lofty soul. The members of the so-called shura committee that 'Umar instituted for selecting the caliph after him were warned about Mu'awiyah when 'Umar added this paragraph:

'If you resort to jealousy among yourselves and if you begin to oppose each other and if there is mutual enmity among you, Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan will take over you in this matter.'24

When Mu'awiyah became sure that 'Umar the caliph would not take any action against him and would continue to defend him, he initiated such steps in Syria that a power-hungry king takes in order to strengthen his rule and power.

Economic Policy Of 'Umar

Historicists of Islam have unanimously agreed that, in his policies, 'Umar turned away from the practice of Abu-Bakr and, in distributing allowances among the Muslims, he did not follow the principles of equity. Rather, he preferred some people to others. He had proposed the same policy to Abu- Bakr, but he had declined to accept it, saying, 'Almighty Allah has not preferred anyone over others. He rather said, 'Charities are for the poor and the destitute and He has not considered any people superior to others.''25

When caliphate was transferred to him, 'Umar began to enforce the policy that he had proposed to Abu-Bakr and he justified it saying, 'Abu-Bakr had an opinion regarding this matter and I have another opinion. I shall not consider at par one who has fought against the Prophet and one who has fought to his side.'26

He sanctioned five thousand units of currency for the Muhajirun and the Ansar who participated in the Battle of Badr. However, those who had accepted Islam like the fighters of the Battle of Badr but those who did not take part in this battle were sanctioned four thousand dirham. For the widows of the Prophet, he specified twelve thousand dirham each except for Safiyyah and Juwayriyyah, whom were sanctioned only six thousand dirham each.

They did not accept it. Al-'Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet (S), was given twelve thousand, Usamah ibn Zayd four thousand, and Abdullah, 'Umar's son, three thousand. Abdullah thus expressed his displeasure at this and said, 'O father, why did you sanction him one thousand dirham more than me? His father had no superiority over my father and he is not superior to me ''

'Umar answered, 'Usamah's father was more preferred to the Messenger of Allah (S) than your father and Usamah was dearer to him than you were'' 27

'Umar gave preference to the Arabs over the non-Arabs and the free men over the slaves.28

This policy created class differences in the Muslim society and people were discriminated according to their tribes and groups. Experts of genealogy became active in their field 29 to write down lineages and to classify the tribes according to their origins. As a result, a rift was caused among the Muslim community; the non-Arabs began to bear malice towards the Arabs, and patriotism and nationalism found themselves spacious areas in the inner selves of Muslims.

The fact is that Islam put an end to such tendencies and considered the relation of faith stronger than family relationships. It commanded the rulers to practice non-partisanship among the people in spite of their family and class differences and emphasized that no bias must be exercised, as no sort of rift must be allowed in the social fabric of the Muslim community.

'Umar's Arguments

Trying to justify his scrapping of equitability and the creation of social class system, 'Umar states that some of the Companions, on the basis of their seniority in Islam and participation in military activities, were superior to others.

However, this justification lacks validity, because the Holy Prophet (S) had under no circumstances never taken into consideration anything from the public wealth to the exception of a particular Companion due to seniority in Islam or exceptional efforts and hardships. Persons like 'Ammar ibn Yasir, Bilal Al-Habashi, and Abu-Dharr were not held superior to other Muslims in the respect of distributing the public treasury.

Besides, the Holy Prophet (S) did not take into consideration the unique contribution of his cousin Imam Ali ('a) who was of the valiant fighters of Islam and who defended the faith at every stage and every time. Rather, he entrusted the reward of those warriors and their recompense with Almighty Allah in the Hereafter.

The economic policy of the Holy Prophet (S) specified absolute equality in grants and allowances so that the society would remain integrated and united and all types of class differences and mutual jealousies would be destroyed.

'Umar's Regret

When 'Umar witnessed the extreme accumulation of wealth with some of the Companions, he was extremely regretful and helpless. He thus said, 'If I had followed the policy that I adopted in the end, I would have taken the excessive wealth from the rich and restored it to the poor.'

In my conception, 'Umar's word requires some consideration. If the excess wealth accumulated by the rich class had been from the bestowals they received in excess, all of them must have belonged to the public treasury and he should have ordered them to be repaid to the state so that economic balance would be created.

If the wealth had been business profits-yet I do not think it was so-taxes should have been collected from them rather than having them confiscated.

Anyway, the monies obtained in war booty, the Jizyah taxes, and the land taxes belong to the public treasury, which is for all Muslims and it was not permitted that some people be given preference over others; i.e. they should have been equally distributed among all Muslims, as the Holy Prophet (S) used to do.

Seclusion of Imam Ali

During the reign of 'Umar, Imam Ali ('a) was highly aggrieved due to the usurpation of his rights, the deliberate negligence of his position, and the misappropriation of his inheritance. The ruling authorities worked on disregarding his status and treating him as an ordinary person. They completely and intentionally forgot his relation to and his status in the view of the Holy Prophet (S).

He became aloof from them and he did not participate in any of their affairs related to government and power. In turn, they did not allow him to participate in their governmental issues. He thus secluded himself from them and, as a result, they alienated him.

Muhammad ibn Sulayman, in his reply to Ja'far ibn Makki with regard to what happened between Imam Ali and 'Uthman, says, 'The first two caliphs (i.e. Abu-Bakr and 'Umar) set against Ali, brought him down from his position, and destroyed his honor in the view of the people. Thus, he became a forgotten thing.'30

Imam Ali ('a), in his conversation with Abdullah ibn 'Umar, mentioned that all hardships that befell him were related to Abdullah's father. Among these hardships was giving precedence to 'Uthman over him.31

Anyway, Imam Ali ('a) kept himself totally aloof and secluded from people, just as he had maintained aloofness during the tenure of Abu-Bakr. He ('a) confined himself to his residence and devoted himself to explaining the Holy Quran. He did not contact anyone except for his sincere companions who recognized his actual status, such as 'Ammar ibn Yasir, Abu-Dharr, Salman, Al-

Miqdad, and the other virtuous companions of the Holy Prophet (S).

Historians unanimously reported that 'Umar used to consult Imam Ali ('a) in some very important matters, taking the answers to the questions that were posed to him. This is because 'Umar had very little knowledge with religious and mundane affairs. He used to refer these queries to Imam Ali ('a) who would not refrain from giving sincere answers and advices.

Probably, Imam Ali ('a) wanted to spread the true commands of Almighty Allah by this way so that the knowledgeable ones would learn and then propagate these commands and laws among people. It is widely reported that 'Umar, on many occasions, used to say, 'Had it not been for Ali, 'Umar would certainly have perished.'

In other words, through authentic reports, it has been proven that 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, during his reign, used to ask and adopt the rulings issued by Imam Ali ('a). Al-Khawarizmi, in Al-Manaqib, has recorded the following incident:

When two men asked him about the rulings of the divorcement of bondmaids, 'Umar turned to a bald man to his side and asked the same question. As he received the answer from the man, 'Umar said it to the two men verbally. Wondering at 'Umar, the two men asked, 'We asked you because you are the caliph! But you referred to a man to take the answer from him!'

'Woe to you,' said 'Umar, 'Do you know who the man to whom I referred the question is? He is Ali ibn Abi Talib! I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying: If the heavens and the earth are put in one scale of a balance and the faith of Ali is put in the other, the faith of Ali will certainly exceed in weight.'[32]

In addition, 'Umar is quoted to have said,

''Ali is the most experienced of all of us in the field of judicature.'33

'Without Ali, 'Umar would have perished.'34

'May Allah take my soul before I face a problem while Abu'l-Hasan (Imam Ali) is not present.'35

'May Allah never keep me to face a problem while Abu'l-Hasan is not there to solve it. 36
It is an established fact that 'Umar was often confronted with legal matters that he could not solve. Hence, he used to rush to Imam Ali ('a) and other Companions. Too famous is this word of 'Umar: 'All people are more informed than 'Umar, including women in their private rooms.'37

One day, a difficult problem came to 'Umar and he was very keen to solve it. He presented it to his companions and said to them, 'What do you say about this matter?'

They replied, 'You are the point of reference and you are the position to remove the difficulties.'

This did not please him; he therefore recited this holy verse:

'O you who believe! Be careful of (your duty to) Allah and speak the right word. (33:70)'

After that, he said to them, 'By Allah, you and I know for sure where the point of reference and knowledge regarding the matter is.'

They said, 'It seems that you are thinking about the son of Abu Talib.'

'Umar said, 'Except for him, where should I go? Has any free woman given birth to any one like him?'

They said, 'O Amir Al-Mu'minin, why do you not call him?'

'Umar replied, 'The Hashimites are characterized by highness, precedence in knowledge, and proximity to Allah's Messenger (S). Ali must be visited, since he is too reverent to visit any. Let us go to him.'

Together with 'Umar, they hastened to Imam Ali ('a) and found him working in a garden he owned, putting on a short pair of trousers, resting on his spade, reciting these holy verses: ***'Does man think that he is to be left to wander without an aim? (75:36)'*** *to the end of the Surah (i.e. Quranic chapter), and his tears shedding on his cheeks.*

Upon seeing him in this condition, all people also started weeping. When they stopped, 'Umar asked him for an answer to the question about which he had come to him. The Imam ('a) immediately answered.

After that, 'Umar said to the Imam ('a), 'By Allah, the truth wanted you, but your people did not want.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered, *'O Abu-Hafs, do not produce untruthful justifications from here and there.'*

The Imam ('a) then recited this holy verse:

'Surely, the day of decision is (a day) appointed.'(78:17)

This answer astounded 'Umar so heavily that he put one of his hands on the other and left so embarrassed as if he was looking through ash.38

Imam Ali advises 'Umar

Concealing his feelings about the usurpation of his right, Imam Ali ('a) advised 'Umar on two occasions in order to safeguard Islam.

When ‘Umar was determined to head for invading Rome, Imam Ali (‘a) warned him against so, saying,

Allah has taken upon Himself for the followers of this religion the strengthening of boundaries and hiding of the secret places. Allah helped them when they were few and could not protect themselves. He is living and He will not die. If you will, your self proceed towards the enemy and clash with them and fall into some trouble, there will be no place of refuge for the Muslims other than their remote cities, nor any place they would return to.

Therefore, you should send there an experienced man and send with him people of good performance who are well-intentioned. If Allah grants you victory, then this is what you want. If it were otherwise, you would serve as a support for the people and a returning place for the Muslims. 39

‘Umar sought the advice of Imam Ali (‘a) regarding leading a campaign to invade the Persians. Imam Ali (‘a) advised him not to go by himself, saying,

In this matter, victory of defeat is not dependent on the smallness or greatness of forces. It is Allah’s religion, which He has raised above all faiths, and His army, which He has mobilized and extended, till it has reached the point where it stands now, and has arrived its present positions. We hold a promise from Allah, and He will fulfill His promise and support His army.

The position of the head of government is that of the thread for beads, as it connects them and keeps them together. If the thread is broken, they will disperse and be lost, and will never come together again. The Arabs today, even though small in number are big because of Islam and strong because of unity.

You should remain like the axis for them, and rotate the mill (of government) with (the help of) the Arabs, and be their root. Avoid battle, because if you leave this place the Arabs will attack you from all sides and directions until the unguarded places left behind by you will become more important than those before you.

If the Persians see you tomorrow, they will say, 'He is the root (chief) of Arabia. If we do away with him we will be in peace.' In this way, this will heighten their eagerness against you and their keenness to aim at you. You say that they have set out to fight against the Muslims.

Well, Allah detests their setting out more than you do, and He is more capable of preventing what He detests. As regards your idea about their (large) number, in the past, we did not fight on the strength of large numbers but we fought on the basis of Allah's support and assistance. 40

During the reign of 'Umar, the Holy Ka'bah was decorated with heavy ornaments, which were presented to this House as gifts. The consultants of 'Umar suggested that he should sell all the ornaments and dedicate the price to developing the Muslim army, because the Holy Ka'bah did not obtain its sacredness and beauty from ornaments. Before he implemented this suggestion, 'Umar had sought Imam Ali's opinion.

Hence, Imam Ali ('a) said to him,

When the Quran was descended on the Prophet, peace be upon him and his descendants, there were four kinds of property.

One, the property of Muslims, which he distributed among the successors according to fixed shares.

Second, the tax which he distributed to those for whom it was meant.

Third, the One-fifth (Khums) levy for which Allah had fixed the ways of disposal.

Fourth, amounts of charity (Sadaqah) whose disposal was also fixed by Allah.

The ornaments of the Ka'bah existed in those days but Allah left them as they were, but did not leave them by omission, nor were they unknown to Him. Therefore, you retain them where Allah and His Prophet placed them.

Thereupon, 'Umar said, 'If you had not been here, we would have been humiliated.' He thus left the ornaments as they were.

Assassination of 'Umar

Brevity has been intended in our discussion of 'Umar's reign without reference to such incidents like 'Umar's personal opinions in the face of religious texts in some issues about which clear-cut texts from the Holy Quran and the Prophetic traditions are available, such as the verdicts issued by 'Umar regarding forbidding the temporary marriage 41 and the temporary marriage during the Hajj season, 42 canceling a paragraph in the ritual adhan (call to prayer) and adding another, 43 making amendments to the laws of divorce, 44 inventing a congregational, recommended prayer known as Salat Al-tarawih, 45 changing some laws of inheritance, 46 changing the ritual funeral prayer, 47 changing the waiting period (i.e. 'iddah) of the pregnant, 48 allowing the selling of the bondmaids who gave birth to a child, 49 deciding that one who cannot find water is not required to perform the (obligatory) prayer, 50 warning against offering a two-unit voluntary prayer after the Afternoon Prayers (Salat Al-'Asr) and beating the Muslims who would offer such prayers, 51 changing the place of the sacred monument known as Maqam Ibrahim (Prophet Abraham's Standing-place)' 52 etc.

These unfounded laws decreed by 'Umar will not be discussed here, for fear of lengthiness and also because Shi'ite master scholars, such as Sayyid Sharaf Al-Din Al-Musawi, in his famous book entitled Al-Nass wa'l-Ijtihad, and Shaykh Abd Al-Husayn Al-Amini, in his famous encyclopedic book entitled Al-Ghadir, have dealt with these matters and their likes in details.

However, what is important here is that we should describe the events connected to the assassination of 'Umar and the important incidents following it, such as the invention of the so-called shura system. Some researchers however ascribed the process of assassi-

nating ‘Umar to the Umayyads as an attempt to get rid of him and have full control over Muslims. 53

Providing many points of evidence, those researchers referred to the fact that Abu- Lu'lu'ah, the assassinator of ‘Umar, was a slave of Al-Mughirah ibn Shu’bah, one of the intimate friends of the Umayyads.

In my view, this is not a theory that can pass the test of research, because ‘Umar’s connection with the Umayyads was very close and stable, and there occurred no sort of rivalry or hard feelings between the two. Besides, ‘Umar was more inclined to them than anyone else, in his capacity as the one and only opponent of Imam Ali (‘a) whose archenemies were none but the Umayyads.

Moreover, ‘Umar had appointed their chiefs as rulers of many Muslim territories. He also exempted them from the processes of halving the wealth of his officials who had been accused of financial corruption, although he had received many complains against them.

‘Umar also paid much attention to the problems of the women of the Umayyads in such a way that he granted four thousand units of currency from the public treasury to Hind, the daughter of ‘Utbah and the mother of Mu’awiyah, so that she would invest it in business.54

In his own house, ‘Umar dedicated a special place that was furnished with the best furniture to Abu-Sufyan. When he was blamed for such deed, ‘Umar said, ‘This is the chief of Quraysh!’ 55

Based on all these ties between ‘Umar and the Umayyads, it becomes improbable to believe that they arranged to assassinate him.

However, it is confirmed that Abu-Lu'lu'ah decided to assassinate ‘Umar of his own and not at the behest of the Umayyads. The rea-

son was that Abu- Lu'lu'ah, the Persian, was a young man angered and aggrieved for the sake of his community after he had seen his homeland conquered by force, losing its glory and dignity and had seen 'Umar exaggerate in despising the Persians, declaring that he wished if there were an iron mountain separating him from them (i.e. the Persians).

'Umar thus detested the Persians so much that he used to keep them at a distance and he had even issued orders that they, except for their children, should not enter the capital, Al-Madinah. 56 He had also issued a verdict that only the Arabs should be entitled to inheritance and Persians and non-Arabs should not inherit from their predecessors except those who were born in the lands of the Arabs.57

'Umar used to call them 'ilj (a non-Arab infidel). On day, Abu-Lu'lu'ah himself went to 'Umar to complain to him about the hardships he had to bear at the hands of his master Al-Mughirah and the heavy land taxes that his master had imposed on him. However, 'Umar scolded him and said, 'I think that the land tax imposed on you is still little if compared to the professions you master.'

This reply of 'Umar created animosity and malice in Abu-Lu'lu'ah's heart towards 'Umar, causing him to carry a grudge against 'Umar. On another occasion, 'Umar passed by him and said, 'I hear that you have claimed that you can construct a mill that can run on the wind?'

This ridicule made Abu-Lu'lu'ah very displeased and he replied at once, 'I will most certainly make such a mill for you about which all people will talk.' The next day, he went on to kill 'Umar 58 and hit him three strikes one of which was under the navel that it could tear the interior skin. Abu-Lu'lu'ah then attacked the people who were present in the mosque and could stab eleven men. He then killed himself. 59

Bleeding from the places of the injuries, 'Umar was carried to his house. He asked the people around him, 'Who has attacked me?'

They replied, 'It was the slave of Al-Mughirah.'

He said, 'I have told you not to bring any of these non-Arab infidels to us, but you did not obey me.'[60]

His family summoned the physician who promptly arrived and asked his patient, 'What is your favorite drink?'

'Umar answered, 'It is wine.'

So, they gave him wine to drink but it came out through the wounds. People said, 'There is dirt in the blood.' After that, they gave him milk to drink, but that also came out from his wound. Then, the physician became hopeless about him and said, 'I do not think that you will survive the late afternoon.'[61]

When he became certain that his end was near, 'Umar told his son Abdullah to calculate how much he owed. When they checked, they found that he had owed the public treasury about sixty thousand (either dirham or dinar).

'Umar thus instructed his son Abdullah, saying, 'If the property of the family of 'Umar is sufficient to cover this amount, then you must pay it from your property. If it is not sufficient, you must ask the Banu-'Adi folks to settle the amount. If their money also does not cover the amount, then you must take it from the people of Quraysh. Beyond that, you must not ask anyone else.'[62]

This instruction is subject to many points of criticism some of which are as follows:

1. The huge sums of money that 'Umar had taken as loans from the public treasury were utilized for his family expenses exclusively. If he had spent it on public affairs of Muslims, there would not have been any need to recover it from his family. Without any doubt, this is not at all in accordance with the character of 'Umar

that historians have portrayed, saying that he used to be very strict and austere regarding the public funds and he did not use anything of it for his personal needs.

2. 'Umar asked his son Abdullah to repay his debts from his own family funds and if that was not enough, it should be supplemented by the funds of his clan. This shows that he had also spent some of the public money on the Banu-'Adi clan. If not, he would not have asked that his debts should be covered by the members of this clan, because he had no right on other people's wealth even if they were his relatives.

In my opinion, 'Umar had given them the money from the pubic treasury, which is in contrary to the claims that he was strict towards his family and clan members so much so that he subjected them to poverty and hardship, he used to deal with them with so much austerity, and he deprived them of luxury to such an extent that he considered his relatives at par with other Muslims!

3. 'Umar then asked his son Abdullah to collect the amount from the members of the Quraysh tribe. This shows a deep and firm attachment of 'Umar to these people. As historians state, 'Umar was the sole representative of the Quraysh clan in his activities and he used to fulfill their desires and aspirations.

Back to the developments of 'Umar's assassination, when Abdullah his son became assured that his father would very soon die, he requested him to nominate one to succeed him to the position of caliphate so that he would not leave the affairs of the community without a manager.

He thus said, 'O father, appoint someone as the next caliph over the community of Muhammad, because if the herder of the camels or sheep leaves his flock without a caretaker, you will consider him to have abandoned his trusts. With greater reason, you must not leave Muhammad's community without a caretaker. Therefore, you are required to appoint someone as your successor in this matter.'

'Umar glanced at his son and said, 'If I appoint one as caliph over them, then Abu-Bakr did the same; and if I neglect, then the Messenger of Allah did leave them without appointing a leader.'63

How strange this statement is! 'Umar, having been bedridden, seemed to have forgotten, due to *hallucination,* that the Holy Prophet (S) appointed Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib('a) as the next leader and as his successor to the position of leadership on that day at Ghadir Khumm and ordered all Muslims to pay homage to him.

'Umar himself was one of those who swore allegiance to Imam Ali ('a) as their next leader, saying his famous word: 'Congratulations to you, O Ali! You have become my master and the master of all believing men and women.'

Once more, was Abu-Bakr more caring for the Muslims than the Holy Prophet (S) was, so that he appointed the next caliph while the Prophet (S) neglected this critical issue and refrained from nominating any one for this sensitive position?

In any case, 'Umar's wounds troubled him in such an intensifying way that he declared, 'If whatever I have on the earth had been of gold, I would have given all as penalty in lieu of my release from the divine chastisement before I meet Him.'64

'Umar then asked his son Abdullah to put his cheek on the ground. Abdullah did not pay any heed to 'Umar's request, believing that his father had lost his mind. 'Umar repeated the same request, and Abdullah did not respond. In the third time, 'Umar shouted at his son, 'Put my cheek on the ground! May you lose your mother!'

This time, Abdullah came forward and put the cheek of 'Umar on the ground. 'Umar began to weep bitterly and repeat these words: 'Woe to 'Umar! Woe to 'Umar if Allah will not forgive him.'65

Probably, ‘Umar, in the last moments of his lifetime, recalled the maltreatments and crises he had brought to the Holy Prophet’s Household (‘a).

‘Umar requested his son to take permission from ‘A'ishah to allow ‘Umar to be buried alongside the Holy Prophet (S) and Abu-Bakr. ‘A'ishah did.66

Commenting on this request, Shi’ite theologians express the same objection they raised against the burial of Abu-Bakr next to the Holy Prophet (S), saying: If whatever was left by the Holy Prophet (S) was not to be inherited by his family members; rather, it should be given to the man in authority as a public treasury or alms, according to what Abu-Bakr had reported from the Holy Prophet (S), it would then be senseless for ‘Umar to ask permission from ‘A'ishah to allow him to be buried there.

On the other hand, if the heirs of the Holy Prophet (S) have the right to inherit him according to the laws of inheritance, as is confirmed by the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a), then ‘A'ishah had no share in this inheritance, because widows do not inherit lands; rather, they inherit constructions only. Such being the case, ‘Umar should have asked permission from the actual heirs of the Holy Prophet (S). However, ‘Umar did not.

The shura system

Just like the biased system of Saqifah, ‘Umar’s invention of the so-called shura system was the foundation of all these terrible circumstances and calamities that have befallen the Muslims and was the basic event that has created great mischief in the Muslim world and subjected them to everlasting difficulties and hardships.

Actually, the shura system was a notorious plot purely intended for nothing other than eliminating Imam Ali (‘a) from holding the position of leadership of the Muslim community. It was also pur-

posed for enabling the Umayyads to come to power, as an attempt from ‘Umar to please the emotions of the people of Quraysh whose hearts were still filled with malice and hatred towards Imam Ali (‘a).

In this discussion, we will describe analytically ‘Umar’s innovative shura system away from traditional sentiments, since this issue is strongly related to the life course of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a).

When ‘Umar despaired of survival and saw his imminent end, he began to think about the one who would take over the command after him from those leaders who had taken part in preparing the ground for Abu-Bakr. He then mentioned them one by one and saw that death had come upon all of them.

At that moment, he wailed and expressed regret saying, ‘If Abu-’Ubaydah were alive, I would make him the caliph, because he was the most trustworthy of the community. If Salim, the manumitted slave of Abu-Hudhayfah, were alive, I would appoint him as the caliph as he loved God too much’’

In fact, Abu-’Ubaydah had nothing to do with serving Islam and fighting for its sake. Likewise, Salim the slave of Abu-Hudhayfah was not a prominent personality who had done any favor to Islam; rather, he was an ordinary Muslim. His one and only favor was that he contributed positively to the plot that was hatched under the Saqifah and could protect the members of that plot.

We wonder why ‘Umar did not mention any one of those who were alive and who had participated in serving and reinforcing Islam, such as Imam Ali (‘a) and the other prominent Companions like ‘Ammar ibn Yasir, Abu-Dharr, and the Ansar so that he may have nominated them for this position!

He only searched in the list of the dead Companions and wished that he would have appointed Abu-’Ubaydah or Salim as caliphs if they had been alive!

'Umar's friends asked him to appoint one to succeed him to this position and to govern the affairs of the community. However, 'Umar refused, saying, 'I do not like that I should take the responsibility for this position after my death after I have taken it in my lifetime.'

Not much time passed but that 'Umar defeated his intention and named the six members of the Shura committee and entrusted them to elect one of them for the leadership of the community. In this way, he imposed his choice on the Muslims and made himself take *the responsibility for caliphate after his death after he had taken it in his lifetime!*

Commenting on this procedure, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, in Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 12:260, says, 'What picture can taking responsibility for caliphate be clearer than this? What is the difference in taking such responsibility between appointing a certain person for this position and restricting it to such procedure?'

'Umar then ordered Suhayb to lead the congregational prayers. So, Suhayb did. About this incident, Al-Farazdaq, a famous Arab poet, says, 'Suhayb led the congregational prayers for three times after which he entrusted caliphate with the son of 'Affan to change it into monarchy, yet unintentionally.'[67]

'Umar With The Members Of The Shura Committee

'Umar selected six persons, made them the members of the Shura committee, and ordered them to select one of them to assume leadership. These six persons are namely Imam Ali ('a), Sa'd ibn Abi-Waqqas, Al-Zubayr ibn Al- 'Awwam, Talhah ibn 'Ubaydullah, 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, and Abd Al-Rahman ibn 'Awf.

'Umar also claimed that the Holy Prophet (S) was pleased with these six persons up to the termination of his lifetime and that

they were given the good tidings that they would be in Paradise. 68

It is noticeable that ‘Umar did not give any share to the Ansar who had supported and received the Holy Prophet (S) and the first Muslims of Makkah warmly. This may be because the Ansar took sides with Imam Ali (‘a). Hence, the six-member shura committee was restricted to the people of Quraysh exclusively.

‘Umar ordered that these six persons should be summoned. When they presented themselves before him, he addressed them in a very sarcastic and critical manner and ascribed ill-favored descriptions to them that made them unqualified to hold the position of leading the Muslim community.

Historicists have recorded ‘Umar’s conversation with each one of them. Let us now present some of these conversations:

When ‘Umar glanced at these six persons, he said, ‘Are all of you desirous for holding caliphate after me?’

None of them answered him; therefore, he repeated the same question. Here, Al-Zubayr answered, ‘What makes us aloof from it? When you held it, you managed it adequately. We are not less than you are with regard to our family ties to Quraysh, our precedence to this religion, and our relation to the Prophet.’

‘Umar could not refute Al-Zubayr’s claim, because it was perfect. Then, he turned his face towards them and said, ‘May I tell you what you are?’

‘Yes, you may. If we ask you to accept our resignation, you will not,’ they all answered.

‘Umar then began to explain each one’s menTalibty and tendency. Addressing each one of them separately, ‘Umar said to Al-Zubayr, ‘As for you, O Zubayr, you are swiftly bored and fickle. You are secured only when you are pleased, but you cannot be secured

when you are infuriated. One day, you are human, but the other day you are devil.

If this caliphate reaches you, you will spend your day quarreling in the desert for even the most trivial amount of barley (i.e. out of niggardliness). If you hold this position, who will then save the people from you on the days when you are devil? Whose soul will you spare on the days when you are infuriated? Allah will never consent to giving you the administration of the affairs of this community while you are so.'69

Turning his face toward Talhah, 'Umar said, 'Shall I say or I would better keep silent about you?' Reproaching 'Umar, Talhah said, 'Do you ever say anything good?'

Hence, 'Umar said, 'I know you since the day when your finger was hit in the Battle of Uhud. Since that day, you are showing off. Verily, Allah's Messenger departed life while he was angry with you, because of what you had said when the Verse of Veiling was revealed.'70

Turning his face toward Sa'd ibn Abi-Waqqas, 'Umar said, 'You master nothing but cavalry, hunting, and using arrows and lances. Besides, the tribe of Zuhrah cannot manage caliphate and the affairs of people.'71

Turning his face toward Abd Al-Rahman ibn 'Awf, 'Umar said, 'If the half of the faith of all Muslims is weighed to your faith, your faith will preponderate. However, this matter is not suitable to one who is as weak as you are. Besides, the tribe of Zuhrah has nothing to do with such affairs.'72

Finally, 'Umar turned his face toward Imam Ali ('a) and said, 'You would be the most qualified for this position unless you had sense of humor! By Allah I swear this: If you assume this position, you will most certainly lead people to the brightest truth and the straightest path.'

We wonder at which situation Imam Ali (‘a) had a sense of humor due to which he was unqualified to rule over people. It is known for everyone that Imam Ali (‘a) was always serious and steadfast on the truth throughout his lifetime. However, ‘Umar confessed that Imam Ali (‘a) would lead people to the brightest truth and guide them to the straightest path. Of course, one who is so cannot be unserious and dismissive.

As long as ‘Umar confessed that Imam Ali (‘a), if he assumed leadership, would apply thorough truth to people and lead them to follow the straight path, then why did he make him one of the members of the shura committee rather than appointing him as the next leader directly?

Turning his face toward ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan the chief of the Umayyad family and the one who wrote down Abu-Bakr’s decision of appointing ‘Umar as the next caliph, ‘Umar said, ‘It is really yours! I see coming that the people of Quraysh will entrust this position to you because they love you, and you will certainly place the sons of Umayyah and the sons of Abi-Ma’it on the shoulders of people.

You will also give them the allowances exclusively. Then, a group of the wolflike ferocious Arabs will march toward you and slaughter you on your bed. By Allah, if you do that, they will do so; and if they do so, you will have done that.’

‘Umar then took ‘Uthman from the neck and said, ‘When this will take place, then remember these words of mine.’[73]

It goes without saying that the people of Quraysh did not give the position of caliphate to ‘Uthman; rather, ‘Umar did. Besides, ‘Umar selected ‘Uthman for this position a long time before his final ailment. In this respect, Al-Hasan ibn Nasr reported that when he once went on Hajj pilgrimage in the company of ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab, the cameleer was singing, ‘The Emir after ‘Umar will be ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan.’[74]

The ‘Umar-invented **shura** system would inevitably lead to ‘Uthman’s winning the caliphate. ‘Umar made ‘Uthman one of the six members of the shura committee while the majority of the other members enjoyed strong ties with the Umayyads and they would never select anyone save ‘Uthman for this position.

The other narration, which has been reported by Ibn Qutaybah, reads as follows:

When the members of the Shura committee met with ‘Umar, they said to him, ‘Say something about us so that we may use your opinion as point of debate and we be guided by your views.’

‘Umar, addressing Sa’d, said, ‘By Allah, nothing prevented me from appointing you as the next caliph except your cruelty and hard-heartedness. Besides, you are a man of war.’

To Abd Al-Rahman, ‘Umar said, ‘nothing prevents me from appointing you as the next caliph except that you are verily Pharaoh (i.e. tyrant) of this community.

To Al-Zubayr, ‘Umar said, ‘nothing prevents me from choosing you except that you are secured in your pleasure but not in your anger.’

About Talhah, ‘Umar said, ‘nothing prevents me from appointing Talhah for this position except that he is arrogant and proud. If he becomes the caliph, he will put the ring of his seal on his wife’s finger.’

To ‘Uthman, ‘Umar said, ‘Nothing prevents me from deciding on you except your bigotry and your favoritism toward your clan.’

To Imam Ali (‘a), ‘Umar said, ‘Nothing prevents me from selecting you except your greed for it. In fact, you are the most qualified of all people for this position, and if you come to it, you shall act on the manifest truth and the straight path.’[75]

'Umar thus associated the members of the Shura with undesirable qualities. He labeled Abd Al-Rahman ibn 'Awf as Pharaoh of the community. If Abd Al-Rahman was such a tyrannical person, how could 'Umar nominate him for the next leadership? However, in the last chapter of his will, 'Umar surprisingly authorized the final decision of caliphate to Abd Al-Rahman and made his opinion binding on all.

In the same way, he alleged that Imam Ali ('a) was greedy for caliphate. This is inaccurate! Imam Ali's biography testifies to the opposite of this accusation. Greed did not find any way to Imam Ali's heart, especially for mundane affairs and worldly positions. He ('a) neither desired for power nor did he ever wish to rule over people.

Imam Ali ('a) only argued the caliphs and proved with overwhelming points of evidence that he was more entitled to this position than any one of them was, in order that he would be able to put into practice the laws of the Holy Quran and the justice of Islam, as he was more qualified and worthier of holding this position than they were. He did not fall prey to selfish desires and did not expose himself to fondness of worldly pleasures.

Expressing this fact more than once, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

O Allah! You know that what we did was not to seek power nor to acquire anything from the vanities of the world. We rather wanted to restore the signs of Your religion and to usher prosperity into Your cities so that the oppressed among Your creatures might be safe and Your forsaken commands might be established.

O Allah! I am the first who leaned (towards You) and who heard and responded (to the call of Islam). No one preceded me in prayer except the Prophet.

You certainly know that he who is in charge of honor, life, booty, (enforcement of) legal commandments and the leadership of the Muslims

should not be a miser as his greed would aim at their wealth, nor be ignorant as he would then mislead them with his ignorance, nor be of rude behavior who would estrange them with his rudeness, nor should he deal unjustly with wealth thus preferring one group over another, nor should he accept a bribe while taking decisions, as he would forfeit (others) rights and hold them up without finality, nor should he ignore a Prophetic practice as he would ruin the people. 76

In his conversation with Ibn ‘Abbas about the level of his distaste for power and his considering valueless the rulership, Imam Ali (‘a), while stitching his sandals, glanced at Ibn ‘Abbas and asked, *‘O Ibn ‘Abbas, what is the value of this sandal in your view?’*

Ibn ‘Abbas replied, ‘O Amir Al-Mu'minin, it is of no value.’

Imam Ali (‘a) said, *‘To me, it is better than your caliphate unless I may establish the truth and remove falsehood.’*

The third narration about ‘Umar’s conversation with the members of the **shura** committee was reported by Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, as follows:

‘Umar looked at the members of the shura committee and said, ‘Each one of you has come to me giving movement to his devil and aspiring to become a caliph.’

He then turned his face toward Talhah and said, ‘As for you, O Talhah, is it not you who said, ‘If the Prophet passes away, I will marry his widows?’ The Almighty Allah has not considered Muhammad to have the priority to marry our cousins over us. Thus, the Almighty Allah has revealed about you:

‘It does not behove you that you should give trouble to the Apostle of Allah, nor that you should marry his wives after him ever.’(33:53)

Then, ‘Umar, addressing Al-Zubayr, said, ‘As for you, O Al-Zubayr, by Allah, your heart never softened even for a single day

or a single night, and you have always been cruel and sharp-tongued.'

Addressing 'Uthman, 'Umar said, 'As for you, O 'Uthman, by Allah, a heap of dung is better than you are.'

Turning his face towrd Abd Al-Rahman, 'Umar said, 'As for you, O Abd Al- Rahman, you are so weak and you prefer your folks to all others.'

About Sa'd, 'Umar said, 'As for you, O Sa'd, you have an angry disposition and you are a mischief-maker.'

'Umar then addressed his words to Imam Ali ('a), saying, 'As for you, O Ali, by Allah, if your faith is weighed against the faith of all the people of the earth, your faith shall be heavier.'

Imam Ali ('a) arose and departed from there. 'Umar then turned his face toward the attendants and said, 'I do recognize the status of this man. If you entrust him with your affairs, he will bring you on an illuminated path.'

They all asked, 'Who is he?'

He replied, 'He is this man who has just left us.'

They asked, 'What prevents you from appointing him (as the next leader)?' 'Umar replied, 'No, this is impossible.'77

Let us wonder why it is impossible to appoint Imam Ali ('a) as the next caliph, especially after the Holy Prophet (S) had appointed him as the next leader of the Muslim community and the successor of him to this position on that day at Ghadir Khumm. Is there any defect in Imam Ali's personality that makes him unqualified to hold this position?

Actually, there is one defect in the views of these people: their minds are suffocated with malice and hatred toward the Imam ('a) after he had killed their heroes and chiefs.

Verily, Imam Ali (‘a) is the true successor of the Holy Prophet (S), the door to his knowledge, and the only one who would judge between the servants of Almighty Allah with justice in all of their affairs.

‘Umar thus criticized each one of these members of the shura committee except for Imam Ali (‘a) whom he considered great and confessed his eligibility and suitability for caliphate, confirming that if he took the affairs of the community in his control, he would lead them on the true path. However, ‘Umar did not consider it worthwhile to appoint him as the caliph.

The supervising body over elections

Probably, I have not seen any other procedure as baseless as the procedure of the Shura committee. It did not have any sort of originality and balance. It was very far from the fact that it should be representative of all views of the community. Different groups should have been represented therein, because in this Shura, ‘Umar had given the view of a particular group precedence over the opinion of the people who only represented their own views.

‘Umar established a supervising body over the process of election. The members of this body had nothing else to do but to supervise over the process. ‘Umar summoned the members of the shura committee and said to them, ‘Bring with you some chiefs of the Ansar; rather, nothing from your affair should be in their hands.

Along with you, bring also Al-Hasan ibn Ali and Abdullah ibn Al-’Abbas, for they enjoy close relation with the Holy Prophet (S) and I hope that their presence will endue you with blessings. However, there will be no share in your affair for them.’[78]

‘Umar distanced the Ansar and did not allow them any share in the processes of nomination and selection. Rather, he made them responsible for supervision, which amounted to their deprivation of rule and implied that they were not worth much, since this is-

sue, in 'Umar's conception, was for the members of the Shura committee and others were of no consequence.

Thus, 'Umar broke the covenant that Abu-Bakr had made when he promised the Ansar of obtaining senior offices in his government, saying, 'Rulers are from us, and assistants are from you, the Ansar.' In fact, 'Umar did not give any office to any one of the Ansar; rather, he made them policemen and soldiers to guard his government.

Moreover, we do not know what blessings existed in the presence of Al-Hasan ibn Ali ('a) and Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, while they did not have any say in the matter of selecting the caliph.

Intending to strengthen his plan of shura, compact the articles of his will, and impose it on Muslims, 'Umar turned to Abu-Talhah Al-Ansari, who was the chief-in-command of 'Umar's police, and said to him, 'O Abu-Talhah, Allah has fortified Islam through you and your people, the Ansar. So, select fifty persons from you and bind them to put this matter into effect as soon as possible.'

After that, 'Umar turned to Al-Miqdad and ordered him, saying, 'If five out of these six members agree on one person and one of them disagrees, then you must behead the one disagreeing! If four of them agree and two disagree, those two must be beheaded, too. If three of them agree on one man and the other three agree on another, then you must support the three among whom Abd Al-Rahman ibn 'Awf will be, while the other three must be killed if they will refuse the one about whom the people agree.'[79]

How strange these commands are! However, I will discuss the matter in further details in a coming chapter.

Warning the companions

The most critical matter in this issue was that 'Umar warned the members of this committee and threatened them with Mu'awiyah

ibn Abi-Sufyan the governor of Syria and with ‘Amr ibn Al-’As if they would not reach an agreement. So, he said to them, ‘O companions of Muhammad! Act sincerely toward each other; otherwise, ‘Amr ibn Al-’As and Mu’awiyah ibn Abi- Sufyan will dominate you in the matter of caliphate.’

Shaykh Al-Mufid, the master scholar of the Imamiyyah Shi’ah, commenting on this statement, says: ‘By this statement, ‘Umar only intended to instigate Mu’awiyah and ‘Amr ibn Al-’As to obtain the power of caliphate and he encouraged them to do so, because Mu’awiyah was his agent and deputy governor in Syria and ‘Amr ibn Al-’As was his agent and deputy governor in Egypt.

‘Umar anticipated that caliphate would be gained by Imam Ali (‘a) if ‘Uthman would be too weak to gain it. He therefore issued this statement in the hope that people would convey it to these two men who were in Syria and Egypt; and in case caliphate would return to Imam Ali, these two would seize power in the Muslim territories they were ruling.’80

This analytical commentary is so accurate. ‘Umar wanted Mu’awiyah and ‘Amr to rebel and go up against Imam Ali (‘a) once he would come to power. ‘Umar’s desire was fulfilled completely. When Imam Ali (‘a) held the position of caliphate, Mu’awiyah and ‘Amr were the first to revolt and defy his government.

Imam Ali’s reaction

Without any doubt, Imam Ali (‘a) had full awareness of ‘Umar’s attitude to him, since ‘Umar had never desired that Imam Ali (‘a) would assume caliphate and undertake the mission of running the affairs of the Muslims. He also knew for sure that ‘Umar designed this so-called shura committee to keep caliphate away from him and to pave the way for ‘Uthman, the chief of the Umayyad family, to come to power.

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) met his uncle Al-’Abbas and without any preface said,

‘O Uncle, caliphate has gone away from us.’

Al-’Abbas, said, ‘Who has informed you about this?’

Imam Ali (‘a) replied, *‘He (i.e. ‘Umar) has equated me to ‘Uthman and then ordered them to be with the majority. He then ordered them to be with Abd Al-Rahman! Of course, Sa’d will not oppose his cousin Abd Al-Rahman, ‘Uthman’s son-in-law, and these two never disagree. Hence, it will be that either Abd Al-Rahman selects ‘Uthman or ‘Uthman selects Abd Al-Rahman’* 81

Imam Ali’s prediction was soon proved true; Abd Al-Rahman, seeking his personal interest and hoping that caliphate would be then given to him, voted for ‘Uthman and entrusted the position of caliphate to him.

The so-called shura system was an obvious plot purposed for eliminating Imam Ali (‘a) from the position of caliphate.

Shaykh Kashif Al-Ghita', a Shi’ite master scholar, commenting on the devising of this system, says, ‘In its reality and essence, the shura system was a real plot and a facade which was capable of bringing out the selection of ‘Uthman as caliph over Muslims. Although it might seem to be for the benefit of Muslims, it brought for them an inescapable calamity that affected them forever.’

After a few years, Imam Ali (‘a) talked sadly about this shura of ‘Umar that was designed to eliminate him from the position of leadership, saying,

Nevertheless, I remained patient despite length of period and stiffness of trial. When he (i.e. ‘Umar) went his way of death, he put the matter of caliphate in a group and regarded me to be one of them. But good Heavens! What had I to do with this consultation? Where was any doubt

about me with regard to the first of them (i.e. Abu-Bakr) that I was now considered akin to these ones?

But I remained low when they were low and flew high when they flew high. One of them turned against me because of his hatred and the other got inclined the other way due to his in-law relationship and this thing and that thing, until the third man of these people stood up with heaving breasts between his dung and fodder.

With him his children of his grandfather (i.e. Umayyah) also stood up swallowing up Allah's wealth like a camel devouring the foliage of spring, until his rope broke down, his actions finished him and his gluttony brought him down prostrate.[82]

Yes, by Allah! Who, be he Muslim or non-Muslim, may have misgivings that Imam Ali ('a) was the best of all Muslims in knowledge, struggle for Islam, and piety? Nevertheless, it was nothing but the rancor of the people of Quraysh that impeded Imam Ali ('a) from holding his natural position of leadership and deprived the Muslim community of his talents and geniuses.

It may be wondered why Imam Ali ('a) agreed to be one of the members of this *shura* plot although he was at variance with the other members.

Answering this question, Imam Ali ('a) himself replied that he did so in order to expose the contradiction in 'Umar's arguments, because 'Umar had said many a times that Prophethood and caliphate should never come together in the same family. If so, why did 'Umar nominate Imam Ali ('a) as a member of this shura committee for selection of a caliph?

Objections to 'Umar's shura system

Old and recent researchers have criticized the shura system, arguing unanimously its artificial nature. This shura system was not sound at all; it is full of points of criticism, objections, and contra-

dictions. In fact, it has created many difficulties and seditious matters, some of which are the following:

First: This setup was very distant from the reality of shura (consultation) and it lacked all of the factors that could have made it successful. Therefore, it should have had the following requisites:

A. It should have represented all classes of the community.

B. The government should not have had any interference in the matter of selection directly or indirectly.

C. General freedoms should have been granted for those who were to take part in the selection.

However, 'Umar's so-called shura lacked all these qualities and none of them were present in that setup, because it prevented the Muslim community from selecting a candidate of their choice and no one was accorded the freedom to select a caliph of his choice. Rather, the matter was entrusted with only six persons and their view was decreed to dominate the view of the entire community.

'Umar, by devising this system, banned such prominent personalities like 'Ammar ibn Yasir, Abu-Dharr Al-Ghifari, and Malik Al-Ashtar not to mention the ordinary people, who should have been given a role in this process of election, from having any share in it. This is in fact a sort of uncontested recommendation that some regimes impose on their peoples so as to pay no attention to their wills.

In addition, 'Umar ordered the police to interfere in this matter and gave them free hand to kill any of the members of the shura committee who would disagree with the others.

In the same way, 'Umar restricted the period of election to three days only, giving them no chance to think of the matter without stinting, because he anticipated that situations would take another course and the popular sectors would interfere to vote for the

fittest. If this would take place, 'Umar's purpose behind the devising of this shura system would certainly fail.

Second: This shura system included people who were at variance with Imam Ali ('a) and who harbored malice against him. For instance, it contained Talhah who belonged to the Taym clan, the clan of Abu-Bakr, and who competed with Imam Ali ('a) for the post of caliphate.

It also contained Abd Al-Rahman ibn 'Awf the son-in-law of 'Uthman. This man was the most inimical to Imam Ali ('a) among the Muhajirun. To historicists, Abd Al-Rahman was one of those who had helped Abu-Bakr force Imam Ali ('a) to pay him the oath of allegiance.

It also included Sa'd ibn Abi-Waqqas who was full of enmity and jealousy toward Imam Ali ('a), because the Imam ('a) had killed his maternal uncles, the polytheists of Umayyah. Sa'd's mother is Hamnah the daughter of Abu- Sufyan. When Muslims paid allegiance to Imam Ali ('a) and unanimously selected him as the caliph, Sa'd refrained.

The shura committee also included 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, the chief of the Umayyad clan. The Umayyads' opinion about Imam Ali ('a) is known for everybody; they antagonized him openly and secretly. Hence, 'Umar selected such persons for the shura committee, because they were the vehement enemies of Imam Ali ('a) so that he would not be elected as the next caliph.

Remarking about the factors that influenced the process of election, Imam Ali ('a) said,

However, I spread my wings when they spread their wings and when they began to fly I also took to the air. Thus, one of them gave ear to his animosity and the other one inclined towards his son-in-law along with the other problems.

In brief, the one and only reason beyond devising this shura system was to keep Imam Ali (‘a) away from power and to entrust caliphate to the Umayyads.

This is the opinion of historicists and researchers. In this respect, Dr.Abdullah Al-’Ala'ili says,

The appointing of six persons in the shura system prepared the ground for the Umayyads to come to power and to raise the castle of their authority on the shoulders of Muslims.

The same conclusion was made by Sayyid Mir Ali Al-Hindi who says,

‘Umar’s lack of attention to the interests of Muslims made him select these six persons from among the best people of Al-Madinah without following the policy of his predecessors. The Umayyads had a strong lobby in Al- Madinah. Based on this fact, ‘Umar’s selection of these persons paved the way for the prevalence of the plots and conspiracies of the Umayyads who harbored animosity toward Islam. Then, they had to find themselves a place in this religion in order to fulfill their greed and build the castle of their greatness on the shoulders of Muslims.

It does not require very much effort to understand that the invention of the *shura* system was only intended to eliminate Imam Ali (‘a) from holding the leadership of Muslims and to hand over dominion to the Umayyad dynasty.

Third: Deliberately, ‘Umar tried to keep the Ansar away from this shura. Taking no heed of the Ansar, ‘Umar did not allow them any share in rule although their contributions to the triumph of Islam were too great to be neglected. It was they who gave refuge to the Holy Prophet (S), supported Islam in times of difficulties and helplessness, and sacrificed their sons for the religion.

Confessing of their favors, the Holy Prophet (S) instructed Muslims to pay much attention to them and treat them as perfectly as

possible.

In the same way, 'Umar did not reserve any position in the shura for important personalities like 'Ammar, Abu-Dharr, and other senior Companions. Most probably, 'Umar took into deep consideration the inclination of these personalities towards Imam Ali ('a). He knew for sure that these persons would elect none but Imam Ali ('a); therefore, he eliminated them from the process of election and restricted this process to the persons who were known for their animosity towards the Imam ('a).

Fourth: Among the curious aspects of this shura system is that 'Umar testified in favor of the shura committee members that when the Holy Prophet (S) departed life, he was pleased with these six persons and that he (S) gave them glad tidings that they would be in Paradise. On the other hand, 'Umar gave orders to his policemen to kill any one of these six persons who would delay in selecting a caliph from among them!

Criticizers of the shura system arouse the following wonderment:

How was it possible for 'Umar to order of killing these persons after he had confessed that the Holy Prophet (S) was pleased with them to the last moment of his lifetime? Besides, to delay in nominating a person for the next caliphate is not that grand sin due to which one deserves death penalty in the law of Islam and it does not tantamount to apostasy, the penalty of which is sentencing to death penalty.

In fact, Islam has deemed unlawful to shed the inviolable blood and deemed necessary to think thousand times before passing a judgment of death penalty. Excluded from this law are some certain cases whose details can be found in books of religious laws. However, none of these cases was applicable to the issue of these six persons.

Fifth: 'Umar restricted the membership of the shura to these six persons on the basis of the claim that the Holy Prophet (S) was

pleased with them to the last moment of his lifetime. However, this claim cannot stand as convincing evidence on restricting the shura membership to these six persons, because the Holy Prophet (S) was pleased with many more Companions when he passed away.

Hence, favoring these six persons to all the others enters under the jurisprudential rule of unfounded preference, which is, in the view of the scholars of 'ilm Al-usul (Principles of Muslim Jurisprudence), is decided as unfavorable act.

Sixth: Of the objections leveled against the shura system is that 'Umar gave precedence to the choice of the group of Abd Al-Rahman ibn 'Awf and considered it superior to the group of Imam Ali ('a). This partiality clearly shows 'Umar's leaning toward the Umayyad powers who were inimical and unjust to Imam Ali ('a).

Besides, we cannot find any peculiarity in Abd Al-Rahman due to which he deserved such superiority. It is well-known that Abd Al-Rahman, as well as Al-Zubayr and Talhah, confiscated the public properties and donations and possessed incalculable amounts of money that they did not know where and how to spend them.

Historicists state that Abd Al-Rahman amassed so much gold that they had to use hammers to break it into pieces. It is thus well-known that Abd Al- Rahman, as well as his matches among the capiTalibsts of the family members of Umayyah, embezzled these money and gold from the public treasury.

Can such a person be given precedence over Imam Ali ('a) whose situations in supporting Islam, talents, geniuses, asceticism, refusal of nepotism and special interest, and thoughtful consideration in all affairs that pertained to the religion are too famous to be ignored even by his enemies? Almighty Allah says in His Book,

Say: ***Are those who know and those who do not know alike? (39:9)***

Seventh: The shura system created feelings of rivalry and competition among the members in such a way that each of them considered himself to be equal to and as important as the others while such a scenario did not exist previously. Sa'd was subservient to the command of Abd Al-Rahman and Abd Al-Rahman was obedient to 'Uthman and one of his sincere friends and supporters.

However, after the shura process, a strange rift developed between them so much so that Abd Al-Rahman began to conspire against 'Uthman. He asked Imam Ali ('a) to be with him and take up arms to fight against 'Uthman. In his last will, Abd Al-Rahman willed his people to prevent 'Uthman from offering the ritual Funeral Prayer to him after his death.

As for Al-Zubayr, he was a sincere follower of Imam Ali ('a). He stood to the side of the Imam ('a) during the conspiracy of the Saqifah and bore many hardships and difficulties in this regard. During the reign of 'Umar, Al-Zubayr once declared, 'By Allah, if 'Umar dies, I shall give the oath of allegiance to Ali.'

However, the shura process imbued him with such a feeling of superiority that he began to consider himself at par with the Imam ('a). Finally, during the Battle of the Camel, Al-Zubayr took up the sword against Imam Ali ('a).

In the same way, the shura system created mutual animosity among its members, because each one of them considered himself the most qualified for caliphate and thought that he was better than the others. This animosity and conflict that developed among them became the cause to harm the unity of Muslims and it rendered them disunited.

One day, Mu'awiyah said to Abu'l- Husayn whom Ziyad had sent as his delegate to meet Mu'awiyah, 'I have received information that you are clever and intelligent; so, answer this question of mine.'

'Ask whatever you like,' Abu'l-Husayn said.

Mu'awiyah asked, 'What was the very matter that destroyed the unity of Muslims and created discord among them?'

Abu'l-Husayn answered, 'It is the assassination of 'Uthman.'

'You have done nothing, (because this answer is wrong),' Mu'awiyah said. 'Was it Ali's action against you and his battle with you?' asked Al-Husayn. 'This is wrong, too,' said Mu'awiyah.

'Was it the uprising of Talhah, Al-Zubayr, and 'A'ishah and Ali's war on them?' said Abu'l-Husayn.

'This is wrong, too,' said Mu'awiyah.

Abu'l-Husayn then said, 'I do not know anything else.'

Explaining the matter, Mu'awiyah said, 'I will tell you the reality of the matter. Nothing has destroyed the unity of the Muslims and divided their views except the shura system through which 'Umar restricted the process of election to six persons. To explain, Almighty Allah sent Muhammad with true guidance and true religion so that the religion would prevail over all the other religions even though polytheists may be averse.

Thus, Muhammad acted upon what the Almighty Allah had commanded him. Then, Allah took him to Himself. Muhammad advanced Abu-Bakr to lead the congregational prayers; therefore, people accepted Abu-Bakr to lead their worldly affairs after the Messenger of Allah (S) had selected him to run the religious affairs.

Thus, he acted upon the practice of the Messenger of Allah (S) and followed the same manners and behavior until Almighty Allah raised him up. Abu-Bakr appointed 'Umar in his place and he ('Umar) also continued his (Abu-Bakr's) practice and manners.

After that, 'Umar formed a committee of six persons each one of whom hoped that he would be the caliph and each one's folks

wanted him to be the next caliph, looking forward to holding this position. If 'Umar, just like Abu-Bakr, had appointed a certain person to be his successor to this position, there would not have been any controversy in this matter.'[83]

Mode of selection

When 'Umar departed from this world and he was buried in his final abode, the police officers surrounded the members of the shura committee and froced them to meet and select a caliph from among themselves to run the affairs of the Muslims, so that the will of 'Umar would be put into effect.

They held a meeting in the center of the public treasury or, according to another report, in the house of Masrur ibn Makhramah, under the supervision of Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Abdullah ibn 'Abbas. Al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah and 'Amr ibn Al-'As hastened to that place and sat at the doorstep, but Sa'd scolded them and said, 'Do you want to say that you were present and you were among the shura members?'[84]

The shura members argued with one another, each one canvassing his own candidature and trying to prove himself as one most eligible for the post; therefore, a great clamor and argument arose.

In the midst of this clamor, Imam Ali ('a) set out to warn them against the future mischief and destruction that would attack them if each one of them would follow his selfish interests and would not give any importance to the interests of the community.

He ('a) thus said,

No one preceded me in inviting people to truthfulness, giving consideration to kinship, and practicing generosity. So, hear my word and preserve what I say. Maybe you will see soon after today that over this matter, swords will be drawn and pledges will be broken, so much so that

some of you will become leaders of the people of misguidance and followers of people of ignorance. 85

If they had paid heed to the Imam's warnings, they would have saved the community from future upheavals and calamities and would have ensured peace and prosperity for it. However, they followed selfish desires, proving true the prophecy of the Imam ('a). Not much time passed when swords were unsheathed, conflicts spread, mischief prevailed, and some of them became leaders of misguidance and others followed the ignorant ones.

Arguments and debates took place in that place. These members did not reach a desirable decision, and the meeting ended without achieving its aim, while people were impatiently waiting for a decisive result. The meeting convened for a second time but again its purpose was defeated.

Then, Abu-Talhah Al- Ansari addressed them with warnings, threats, and promises, saying, 'No, by the One in Whose hands is the life of 'Umar! I shall not give you more than the period of three days that is fixed for you.'

On the third day, which was their last opportunity, the meeting was convened. A severe communal aspect became obvious when Talhah surrendered his right to 'Uthman, which was absolutely against the interests of the community. He took this step as a result of a deep animosity he had harbored toward Imam Ali ('a), because Imam Ali ('a) had taken a stand against Abu-Bakr, the cousin of Talhah, in the matter of caliphate.

Al-Zubayr also came forward and surrendered his vote to Imam Ali ('a), because he was closely related to him. Sa'd also stood up and gave up his vote in favor of his cousin Abd Al- Rahman ibn 'Awf so that he would support him in his choice.

The choice of Abd Al-Rahman was binding on all and his position was very strong because 'Umar had assured him about it and given him the final say in the matter of caliphate. However, he

had a very weak personality and determination and he was unfit to bear the responsibility for choosing a caliph.

Therefore, he decided to nominate someone else for this position. He was inclined to 'Uthman, his father-in-law. Meanwhile, he responded to the advice of the people of Quraysh who had recommended him to vote for 'Uthman against Imam Ali ('a) who had killed their heroes and chiefs, since 'Uthman would respond to their aspirations.

At last, the terrible moment arrived that changed the course of history and Abd Al-Rahman ibn 'Awf told his nephew to call Imam Ali ('a) and 'Uthman to him.

Musawwar, the nephew, asked, 'Whom should I summon first?' Abd Al-Rahman replied, 'Whomsoever you like.'

He thus went out to bring these two persons while the groups of the Muhajirun, the Ansar, and other people crowded in that place. Then, Abd Al- Rahman came forward and presented to them the matter of caliphate, saying, 'O people! People have gathered from different areas and localities to which they will return. So, please give me advice.'

At that time, 'Ammar ibn Yasir the pure Companion came forward and gave his counsel, which was in the interest of the community against disunity and conflict. He said, 'If you want that there should be no discord among the Muslims, you must give allegiance to Ali.'

Al-Miqdad also came forward and supported the statement of 'Ammar. He said, ''Ammar is right. If you give allegiance to Ali, we shall accept and follow him.'

It was the time when the oppressive and malicious powers of Quraysh gained momentum against Islam and the statements of 'Ammar and Al-Miqdad were denounced and the senior members of the Umayyad clan demanded the appointment of 'Uthman. Ab-

dullah ibn Abi-Sarh cried at Abd Al-Rahman ibn 'Awf, 'If you want the people of Quraysh not to rise in opposition, you must pay allegiance to 'Uthman.'

Abdullah ibn Abi-Rabi'ah also spoke up and seconded his companion, saying, 'If you pay allegiance to 'Uthman, we shall accept and follow him.'

The prominent companion 'Ammar ibn Yasir replied to Ibn Abi-Sarh saying,
'Since when have you been a well-wisher for Muslims?'

'Ammar was right; Abdullah ibn Abi-Sarh was never a well-wisher for Muslims. He never wished good of Islam. He was of the most inimical persons to the Messenger of Allah (S) who, after the conquest of Makkah, ordered that Abdullah should be killed even if he hung himself to the curtains of the Holy Ka'bah.86

If the proper method and procedure had been followed, these infidels and their likes would not have been able to interfere in the affairs of Muslims, because the Umayyads and other minor tribes of Quraysh were always at the rear and they were not accorded any importance.

This was so because they had opposed the Messenger of Allah (S) and instigated other tribes against him. They had to accept Islam only in order to save themselves from being killed. How were such persons allowed to present their views about the leadership of the Muslim community?

Debates and arguments increased between the Umayyads from one side and the Hashimites and 'Ammar ibn Yasir from the other. 'Ammar then came forward in order to invite Muslims to their wellbeing. He said, 'O people, the Almighty Allah has bestowed greatness to us through His Prophet and favored us with His religion. Then, how long will you keep caliphate away from the Household of the Prophet?'

'Ammar's logic was full of the spirit of Islam and its true guidance, because Almighty Allah endued the people of Quraysh in particular and the other Arabs in general with honor through His religion and made them successful through His Prophet, who was the object of honor and respect for the Arabs.

Hence, it was incumbent on them to reciprocate this favor by not keeping caliphate away from the Prophet's family, since the members of this divinely chosen family were the protectors of knowledge and repositories of the revelation that had descended on the Holy Prophet (S). It was unfair to try to oppress and subjugate them.

Then, a man from the tribe of Banu-Makhzum interrupted 'Ammar and said, 'O son of Sumayyah, you have exceeded your limits! What do you have to do with Quraysh selecting their chief?'

What can be greater blindness than this from the light of Islam and its guidance that this man of Makhzum addressed 'Ammar in this way and called him by his mother's name who was such a respected lady in Islam and whose sacrifices are unsurpassed that Islam is proud of her? She, her husband Yasir, and her son 'Ammar were in the forefront in the strengthening of the faith of Islam in the initial stages. They bore all sorts of hardships and calamities in this course.

The matter of caliphate is related to all Muslims. That is why the son of Sumayyah and the others, whom Almighty Allah had bestowed power and honor after they had been oppressed, participated in it, while the devilish people of Quraysh had no right to interfere in the affairs of Muslims, if the proper procedure and logic had been followed.

Arguments arose between the powers of Islam and the infidels of Quraysh. Sa'd feared that the matter would go out of their hands; he therefore turned to his cousin Abd Al-Rahman and said, 'O Abd Al-Rahman, you should complete the job given to you before people become involved in mischief.'

Abd Al-Rahman glanced at Imam Ali (‘a) and asked, ‘Will you agree to follow the Book of Allah, the traditions of the Messenger of Allah (S), and the system of Abu-Bakr and ‘Umar if we give allegiance to you?’

Imam Ali (‘a) glared at him and understood what he wanted. With the logic of Islam and the manners of noble men, Imam Ali (‘a) replied, *‘Rather, I will follow the Book of Allah, the traditions of the Messenger of Allah (S), and my own judgment.’*

The sources of law in Islam are these very things; namely, the Book of Allah, the traditions of the Messenger of Allah (S) through whom the problems of the people are solved and through which the system of government works. While the actions of Abu-Bakr and ‘Umar had no connection with the sources of Islamic law, because the two of them had wide differences in their policies.

Abu-Bakr’s economic policy was nearer to equality than that of ‘Umar who cancelled equitable distribution of allowances and brought into effect a class system. He preferred some Muslims to others. ‘Umar also imposed many of his personal views that were in violation of the clear-cut laws of Islam.

As a result, Imam Ali (‘a) who was brought up in the lap of Prophethood, would not act according to the actions of these two men, especially they were contradictory to each other in most of actions.

Abd Al-Rahman ibn ‘Awf definitely and without any doubt knew that Imam Ali (‘a) would accept caliphate according to the divine law and manage the affairs of the Muslims on the basis of truth and justice. He would not give any sort of preference to the people of Quraysh and he would consider them equal to all other people. If he would act so, then the gang of Quraysh would be deprived of any privilege and they would not be able to be in command of the government.

If the Imam (‘a) had agreed to the condition specified by Abd Al-Rahman ibn ‘Awf, it would not have been possible for him to follow any policy that establishes justice on the earth. Moreover, if the Imam (‘a) had just apparently accepted the conditions, the people of Quraysh would have laid hurdles in his way and would not have left for him any venue to establish social justice.

In that case, they would have been justified in rebelling against him since he would have failed to fulfill his promises.

Imam Ali’s refusal to respond to the conditions of Abd Al-Rahman is the best proof on the wide-ranging scope of his recognition of the truth and his real personality. If he was one of those who craved after authority and power, he could respond to these conditions; and when he would come to power, he would change his policy and apply whatever he would like. If Abd Al- Rahman then objected to him, he could put him behind bars.

Anyway, when Abd Al-Rahman despaired of any change in the attitude of Imam Ali (‘a), he turned to ‘Uthman and presented him with the same proposal. ‘Uthman immediately gave a positive reply and expressed his complete willingness to fulfill those conditions.

In my conception, there existed a confidential agreement among these two that they had not revealed to anyone and under no circumstances would they have appointed Imam Ali (‘a) to caliphate even if he had agreed to accept the conditions. He had only offered the allegiance in order to conceal their plan; that is why he resorted to this political maneuver.

Some western historians believe that Abd Al-Rahman had used the method of opportunism and deception rather than free election.

Historians say that Abd Al-Rahman rushed to ‘Uthman and, keeping his hand on ‘Uthman’s hand, said to him, ‘O Allah, I hereby transfer the responsibility that I had to ‘Uthman.’

Abd Al-Rahman's homage to 'Uthman came to be like a thunderbolt on the virtuous powers who only intended to establish the rule of God among the people.

Censuring Abd Al-Rahman, Imam Ali ('a) said,

By Allah, you did so only because you hoped what your acquaintance ('Umar) hoped from his acquaintance (Abu-Bakr). May Allah create enmity between you two!

Imam Ali ('a) meant that Abd Al-Rahman had paid homage to 'Uthman as the next caliph hoping that 'Uthman would nominate him as his successor.87

Addressing the people of Quraysh, Imam Ali ('a) then said,

This is not the first day you ally each other against us. I shall observe a goodly patience and I shall plead for divine help regarding what you say.

The Imam's logical statement stung Abd Al-Rahman who therefore replied in a threatening manner, saying, 'O Ali, do not bring an argument against yourself!'

Imam Ali ('a) then left the venue of the gathering, saying,

This will also reach its end.

As for 'Ammar ibn Yasir, he pined away with grief, saying to Abd Al- Rahman, 'By Allah, you have abandoned him while he is the only one who establishes the truth and spreads justice among people.'

As for Al-Miqdad, he was devastated by these developments. He thus said, 'By Allah, I have not seen anything like that which befell the members of this family after the passing away of their Prophet. Surprisingly, the people of Quraysh left a man such that none was seen or heard to be fairer, wiser, and more pious than he is, if they had only supported him.'

Abd Al-Rahman interrupted Al-Miqdad's statement and warned him of mischief, saying, 'O Miqdad, fear Allah, for I fear mischief upon you.'

In this way, the powers of Quraysh overcame the other virtuous powers that wanted to give back the truth to its proper people; namely, the Prophet's Household and the core of wisdom who contributed greatly to the construction of Islam and presented as sacrifices for the sake of this religion such great persons like Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, Hamzah ibn Abd Al-Muttalib, and 'Ubaydah ibn Al-Harith, not to mention the peerless efforts of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib.

- 1. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:164.
- 2. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 6:343.
- 3. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:25; Tarikh At-Tabari 3:433.
- 4. Al-Maqdisi, Al-Adab Al-Shar'iyyah wa'l-Minah Al-Mar'iyyah 1:49.
- 5. Tarikh At-Tabari 4:52.
- 6. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:19; Ibn Sa'd, Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 3:429;
  Tarikh At-Tabari 3:429.
- 7. This horrible claim was made by 'Umar against the Holy Prophet (S). The statement of
  'Umar ibn Al-Khattab is too famous to be denied. He first said it while the Holy Prophet (S)
  was bedridden taking his final breathes. For more details, see Sahih Al-Bukhari Chapter: Recording of Knowledge (Kitabat Al-'Ilm), Chapter: Jihad (Hal Yustashfa' Ila Ahl Al-Dhimmah), Chapter: the Campaigns, (Maras Al-Nabiy) Chapter: the Ailed (Qawl Al-Maris
  Qumu 'Anni), Chapter: Adherence (Karahiyyat Al-Khilaf).
  See also Ibn kajar: Fath Al-Bari fi SharhSahih Al-Bukhari 1:185, Al-Qastalani, Irshad Al-Sari li-SharhSahih Al-Bukhari 1:169, Al-'Ayni, 'Umdat Al-Qari ila SharhSahih Al-Bukhari 1:575, SharhAl-Nawawi 'Ala Sahih Muslim 2:43, Abd Al-Raz-

zaq: Al-Mu•annaf 5:438-9, Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:90, 22, 29, 32, 336, 3:346, 6:106, 116 and 476, Al-Bayhaqi, Dala'il Al-Nubuwwah 7:181 and 283.

- 8. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:25.
- 9. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 3 (Al-khutbah Al-shaqshaqiyyah).
- 10. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 2:422.
- 11. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:74.
- 12. Ibn Sa'd, Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra 3:206.
- 13. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 6:342.
- 14. Tarikh Al-Tabari 4:339.
- 15. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 3.
- 16. Al-Sarkhasi, Al-Mabsut, 16:79.
- 17. Taha Husayn, Al-Fitnah Al-Kubra 1:17.
- 18. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 9:29-30.
- 19. Taha Husayn, Al-Fitnah Al-Kubra 1:20.
- 20. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 3:163.
- 21. Tarikh Al-Tabari 6:114.
- 22. Muhammad ibn Idris Al-Shafi'i, Kitab Al-Umm 4:180; Sahih Al-Bukhari 4:24; Al-Bayhaqi,Al-Sunan Al-Kubra 9:177; Abd Al-Razzaq Al-San'ani, Al-Musannaf 11:388.
- 23. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab 3:1418 (printed in the margin of Al-I•abah fi Tamyiz Al-Sahabah).
- 24. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:187.
- 25. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 8:11.
- 26. Ibn Abi-Shaybah, Al-Musannaf 7:615.
- 27. Al-Rawandi, Al-Khara'ij wa'l-Hara'ij, pp. 148-149.
- 28. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 8:111.
- 29. Ihsan Al-Nass, Al-'Asabiyyah Al-Qabaliyyah (Tribalism), pp. 190.
- 30. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 9:98.
- 31. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 9:54.
- 32. Al-Khawarizmi, Al-Manaqib 13:77; Ibn Al-Maghazili, Manaqib Ali, pp. 289 No. 330; Muhibb Al-Din At-Tabari, Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah 42:167; Ibn 'Asakir, Tarikh Dimashq 42:34; Al-Firdaws bi-Ma'thur Al-Khitab 3:363 H. 7294; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 11:616 H. 32992.

- 33. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:345, Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Isti’ab 3:38; Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh; Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 5:113 H. 21123; Ibn Abi- Shaybah: Al-Mu•annaf 6:138; Ibn Taymiyah: Majmu’ Al-Fatawa 16:482.
- 34. Al-Amini, Al-Ghadir 6:101, 105-6 as quoted from Al-Kinji, Al-Kifayah 96; Fays Al-Qadir 4:357; Ibn Abd Al-Barr: Al-Istiab 3:1103; Fath Al-Malik Al-’Aliy 71; Ta’wil Mukhtalaf Al-Hadith 1:126.
- 35. Al-Amini, Al-Ghadir 6:106 as quoted from Al-Shabalnaji, Nur Al-Ab•ar 79 with a little difference from the text mentioned in Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi’s Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala Al-Sahihayn 1:628 H. 1683; Muhibb Al-Din At-Tabariy: Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah 3-4:166; Ibn Abi’l-Hadid: Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:18; Subul Al-Salam 2:206.
- 36. This saying of ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab has been so famous because it was repeated on various occasions and in different forms such as the following:

  ‘May Allah never keep me alive to face a problem while Abu’l-Hasan is not there to solve it.’
  ‘O Allah: please do not keep me alive to face a problem while Abu’l-Hasan is not there to solve it.’

  ‘I seek Allah’s protection lest I may face a problem while Abu’l-Hasan is not there to solve it.’
  ‘May I never live to face a problem while Abu’l-Hasan is not there to solve it.’ ‘May Allah never keep me alive after you (Ali).’
  ‘I pray to Allah to protect me against any problem while Ali is absent.’

  Besides, there are numerous similar statements of ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab about Imam Ali (‘a). See Dala'il Al-Imamah by At-Tabari (died in the early fourth century of Hijrah), pp. 22; SharhAl-Akhbar by Al-Qasi Al-Nu’man Al-Maghribi (died in AH 363), 2:317, H.651, pp.565, H.651; Kitab Al-Irshad by

Shaykh Al-Mufid (died in AH 413), 1:204; Manaqib Al Abi Talibby Ibn Shahr Ashub (died in AH 588), 1:311, 2:182; Al-'Umdah by Ibn Al-Bitriq Al-Asadi Al-killi (died in app. AH 600), pp. 257; Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah by Al-Hurr Al-'Amili (died in AH 1104), 28:108, H.34333, Section: thubut Al-zina bi'l-iqrar arba'a marrat (Provability Of Fornication By Four-Time Self-Confession), No. 7; Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra by Ibn Sa'd (died in AH 230), 2:239; Al-Manaqib by Al-Khawarizmi (died in AH 568), pp. 96-97, H.97, 98; Tarikh Madinat Dimashq by Ibn 'Asakir (died in AH 571), 25:369, 42:406; Usd Al-Ghabah by Ibn Al-Athir (died in AH 630), 4:23; Dhakha'ir Al-'Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi'l-Qurba by Ahmad ibn Abdullah At-Tabari (died in AH 694), pp. 82; Tahdhib Al- Kamal by Al-Mazzi (died in AH 742), 20:485; Nusum Durar Al-Simtayn by Al-Zarandi Al- kanafi (died in AH 750), pp. 131-132; Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir Al-Dimashqi (died in AH 774), 7:397; Al-I•abah fi Tamyiz Al-Sahabah by Ibn kajar Al-'Asqalani (died in AH 852), 4:467, No. 5704: Biography of Ali ibn Abi Talib; Fath Al-Bari SharhSahih Al- Bukhari by Ibn kajar Al-'Asqalani (died in AH 852), 13:286; Yanabi' Al-Mawaddah li- Dhawi'l-Qurba by Al-Qanaduzi Al-kanafi (died in AH 1294), 1:227; H.57, 58; Fays Al- Qadir SharhAl-Jami' Al-Saghir by Al-Mannawi (died in AH 1331), 4:470, H.5594.

For more information, the reader may kindly refer to the book of Al-Imam Ali fi Ara' Al- Khulafa' (Imam Ali in the Views of the Caliphs) by Mahdi Faqih Imani (contemporary), pp. 93 and on. The author of this book has referred to tens of reference books and chains of authority in this respect. [Translator: Quoted from The Faith of the Shi'ah Imamiyyah (the translation of 'Aqa'id Al-Shi'ah Al-Imamiyyah by Muhammad Risa Al-Muzaffar); translated by Badr Shahin; published by the Ahl Al-Bayt World Assembly, pp. 329-331]

- 37. 'Allamah Al-Amini, in Encyclopedia of Al-Ghadir 6:83, has discussed this issue if prolonged, comprehensive details.
- 38. Ibn Abi'-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 12:79-80.

- 39. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 133.
- 40. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 145.
- 41. Al-Dhahabi, Tadhkirat Al-Huffaz 1:366.
- 42. Al-Daraqutni, Al-'Ilal Al-Waridah fi'l-Ahadith Al-Nabawiyyah 2:156.
- 43. Al-Zarqani, SharhAl-Muwatta' 1:25.
- 44. Sahih Muslim 1:575; Al-Bayhaqi, Al-Sunan Al-Kubra 7:336.
- 45. Ibn Shabbah Al-Numayri, Tarikh Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah 2:714.
- 46. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 4:339.
- 47. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:31.
- 48. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 5:166, H. 3376.
- 49. Ibn Sa'd, Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 3:281.
- 50. Al-'Ayni, 'Umdat Al-Qari 2:172; Sahih Muslim 1:193.
- 51. Al-Haythami, Majma' Al-Zawa'id 2:222.
- 52. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 2:376; Tarikh At-Tabari, Chapter: Events of AH 17.
- 53. Among those who support this view is Shaykh Abdullah Al-'Ala'ili as is mentioned in his precious book Sumuww Al-Ma'na fi Sumuww Al-Dhat (Highness of Meaning in Self-Highness), pp. 34 (Second edition).
- 54. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:33.
- 55. Al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam Al-Nubala' 3:341.
- 56. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 12:185.
- 57. Malik ibn Anas, Al-Muwatta' 2:520.
- 58. Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 2:320.
- 59. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 12:185.
- 60. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 12:187.
- 61. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:26; Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab (printed in the margins of Ibn Hajar Al-'Asqalani, Al-Isabah fi Tamyiz Al-Sahabah) 2:461.
- 62. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 12:188.
- 63. Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 2:321.
- 64. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 12:192.

- 65. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 12:193.
- 66. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 12:190.
- 67. Al-Marzubani, Nur Al-Qabas, pp. 1.
- 68. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:66.
- 69. If 'Umar had known about these bad qualities of Al-Zubayr, how could he nominate him for caliphate?
- 70. 'Umar declares that the Holy Prophet (S) was angry with Talhah. If so, how could 'Umar nominate him for caliphate?

  Commenting on this word of 'Umar, Al-Jahis, an Arab man of letters, say, 'If one had had the dare to say to 'Umar, 'You claimed that the Holy Prophet departed life while he was pleased with these six persons. Now, how come that you say that the Holy Prophet departed life while he was angry with Talhah because of what he had said?' If one had had the dare to say this to 'Umar, 'Umar would most certainly have shot him with arrowheads! However, who had the dare to say to 'Umar a less effective word than this one?' (Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:62 & 3:170)

  The word of Talhah that made the Holy Prophet (S) angry with him up to his passing away is that Talhah once declared, 'If the Prophet dies, we will marry his wives after him.' This world upsetted the Holy Prophet so much that a holy Quranic verse was revealed to him scolding Talhah and saying,

  'It does not behove you that you should give trouble to the Messenger of Allah, nor that you should marry his wives after him ever. (33:53) [Translator]

- 71. As long as this was 'Umar's opinion about Sa'd who was man of war and military affairs, how could he nominate him for caliphate?
- 72. Thus was the example of Abd Al-Rahman's faith in the conception of 'Umar. A sign of this alleged faith is that Abd Al-Rahman refused to select Imam Ali ('a); rather, he delivered caliphate to the Umayyad dynasty who swallowed the

wealth of people and enslaved them! However, if ‘Umar considered Abd Al-Rahman to be weak, how could he nominate him for caliphate?

- 73. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:185-6.
- 74. Ibn Al-Dimashqi, Jawahir Al-MaTalibb 1:290.
- 75. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa’l-Siyasah 1:24.
- 76. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 132.
- 77. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 12:159.
- 78. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa’l-Siyasah 1:28.
- 79. Al-Buladhari, Al-Ansab 5:16-8; Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa’l-Siyasah 1:23; Ibn Abd- Rabbih, Al-’Iqd Al-Farid 2:257.
- 80. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 3:99.
- 81. Tarikh At-Tabari 5:35.
- 82. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 3.
- 83. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-’Iqd Al-Farid 3:73-4.
- 84. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi’l-Tarikh 3:68.
- 85. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 138.
- 86. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab 3:918.
- 87. The Imam’s prayer was answered; enmity in its most vehement form was created between ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan and Abd Al-Rahman ibn ‘Awf that the latter, in his last will, instructed his family members not to let ‘Uthman offer the ritual funeral prayer on his dead body.

‘Uthmans reign

The virtuous powers received the reign of ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan with very much anxiety, grief, and disorder. They considered the success of ‘Uthman in coming to power to have been a triumph for the Umayyad family whose members did not spare a single effort in antagonizing Islam, fighting against it, and plotting against Muslims.

Muslims feared the Umayyads and anticipated that they would ruin the faith. Not long, the Umayyads controlled all the systems of ‘Uthman’s government and utilized the economy for their per-

sonal interests, spreading poverty and chaos all over the territories of the Islamic State.

Once ‘Uthman was paid homage by Abd Al-Rahman ibn ‘Awf as the next caliph, the Umayyads and their allies from the worthless tribes of Quraysh surrounded him and carried him to the Prophet’s Mosque like a bride carried to her new house. Openly, they declared their full support of ‘Uthman’s government and hailed him.

When he ascended the minbar, ‘Uthman sat in the very place where the Holy Prophet (S), neither Abu-Bakr nor ‘Umar, used to sit. This aroused the suspicions of some attendants who thus said to themselves, ‘Today, evil has been born.’[1]

People gathered to listen to what ‘Uthman would say in his first speech to open his political program. Because of the crowds, ‘Uthman stammered and did not know what to say. After big efforts, he could come out with these interrupted and disordered words:

‘To begin with, the first ride is always difficult. I have never been a good speaker before. Allah will know that. Surely, a man between whom and Adam is only a dead father is in need for preaching!’

He then descended the minbar fearful.

It is obvious that these words are incoherent; therefore, the attendants began to ridicule and mock at ‘Uthman. That was one of the bad consequences of the shura system, which was a hard trial for Muslims. See how the commander of eloquence and the pioneer of wisdom and justice in Islam (i.e. Imam Ali) was eliminated from this position; while ‘Uthman was imposed on Muslims as their ruler.

Historicists unanimously agree that ‘Uthman was weak-willed, ill-determined, and incapable of overcoming the events. The tyrants from the Banu-Umayyah clan laid hold of him and put him under

their disposition. All over his reign, 'Uthman could not adopt a single positive situation against the desires and tendencies of the Umayyads.

Depicting 'Uthman's situation, a modern writer says, 'He was just like a dead body before its washer; he had neither might nor power.'

The one in charge of the affairs of 'Uthman's government was Marwan ibn Al- Hakam who ruled all the details of this government.

To Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, the actual ruler in 'Uthman's government was Marwan, while 'Uthman was no more than a name for caliphate.

Seeking to defend 'Uthman, some historicists described him as extremely compassionate, lenient, soft, and kind.

In fact, 'Uthman used these descriptions with his relatives and family members only. On the other hand, he was extremely rude and coarse with those who opposed his policy. For instance, 'Uthman banished Abu-Dharr, the great reformist, to Syria and then to a village called Al-Rabadhah, placing him under house arrest there.

As a result, Abu-Dharr died there hungry and strange, while 'Uthman possessed the gold of the earth, which he spent so extravagantly on the members of the Umayyah and the Abi-Ma'it families.

He also persecuted 'Ammar ibn Yasir physically until he was affected with hernia. Then, the constables of 'Uthman threw 'Ammar in the street while he was fainted.

The whips of 'Uthman's constabulary burnt the body of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud who was then deprived of the allowances.

Thus was the policy of 'Uthman with those who opposed him.

‘Uthman was well-known for his great love for and loyalty to his family members. Once, he declared that he wished he had the key to Paradise in his hand so that he would certainly give it to the Umayyads.

When he came to power, ‘Uthman gave his family members the fortunes of the state exclusively, gifted them millions, and appointed them as the governors of the territories and regions of the Islamic State.

Although he used to receive information about their deviation from the truth, spread of corruption and mischief in the lands, and inclination to worldly pleasures, ‘Uthman did not expose them to the least amount of investigation or interrogation. This was one of the major reasons that made people revolt against him and then assassinate him.

‘Uthman was extremely inclined to luxury and lavishness. He built many palaces and enriched himself profligately from the public treasury.

‘Uthman used to flatter the chiefs of tribes and the celebrated persons at the expense of the religious laws. When Abu-Lu'lu'ah assassinated ‘Umar, ‘Ubaydullah the son of ‘Umar killed Al-Hurmuzan, Abu-Lu'lu'ah’s friend and then killed Jufaynah, Abu-Lu'lu'ah’s daughter.

Of course, this was an inexcusable murder whose penalty is reTalibation (i.e. an eye for an eye) unless the heir of the victim forgives or accepts a financial compensation. Nevertheless, ‘Uthman closed this file and released ‘Ubaydullah as a sort of favoritism to the family of ‘Umar.

When Imam Ali (‘a) demanded ‘Uthman to follow the penal procedures in such cases, ‘Uthman paid no attention at all. Instead, he ordered ‘Ubaydullah to leave to Al-Kufah where he gave him a very spacious land.

Governmental offices in ‘Uthman’s reign

‘Uthman entrusted all the governmental offices to his family members and his relatives the Umayyads and the members of the Abi-Ma’it family although none of these was qualified enough to occupy such positions. Besides, they had no acquaintance with the laws of Islam; rather, they did not hesitate to violate any religious law when it contradicted their personal interests.

For instance, ‘Uthman’s first deputy governor of Al-Basrah district; namely, Abu-Musa Al-Ash’ari, allowed one of his officials to trade in the sustenance of people.2

When ‘Uthman removed Abu-Musa Al-Ash’ari from the deputy governorship of Al-Basrah, he appointed Abdullah ibn ‘Amir ibn Kurayz, his maternal cousin, instead. This man was known for extravagance and reckless spending.3

Having been fed up with the behaviors of their governor Abdullah, the people of Al-Basrah sent ‘Amir ibn Abdullah as their delegate to ‘Uthman to demand him with accepted behaviors. When he met the caliph, ‘Amir said, ‘Some Muslims met to assess your deeds. They concluded that you have committed grand sins. So, I advise you to fear Allah, repent to him, and retreat fom these sins.’

Despising the man, ‘Uthman said to those who were present at him, ‘Look at this man! People claim that he is a good reciter of the Quran. How can he be so while he has come to me to discuss insignificant matters with me? By Allah, this man does not know where Allah is.’

‘Amir replied, ‘Do you claim that I do not know where Allah is?’ ‘Yes, I do,’ ‘Uthman answered.

'Amir said, 'I know for sure that Allah is as a guardian on a watch-tower.'4

This word angered 'Uthman very much that he held a conference with his consultants and discussed with them the question of the objections to his policy. His cousin Abdullah ibn 'Amir suggested that he should take strict procedures against them. 'Uthman accepted this suggestion although others suggested other more reasonable solutions.

However, Abdullah ibn 'Amir kept this office to the last of 'Uthman's reign. When 'Uthman was assassinated, Abdullah robbed the public treasury and left to Makkah, where he joined the gang of Talhah, Al-Zubayr, and 'A'ishah and advised them to march toward Al-Basrah.5

Another example of 'Uthman's officials is Al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah. 'Uthman dismissed Sa'd ibn Abi-Waqqas from the deputy governorship of Al-Kufah and appointed Al-Walid in his place. This man was one of the most corrupt and the most impudent personalities of the family of Umayyah.

The Holy Prophet (S) predicted that this man would be sent to Hellfire.6 His father, 'Uqbah, was one of the most annoying enemies of the Holy Prophet (S), since he used to pollute the door of the Prophet's house with dung.7 In the Battle of Badr, this man was taken as prisoner. Once the Holy Prophet (S) saw him, he ordered Imam Ali ('a) to behead him.8

Hence, Al-Walid bore indescribable rancor against the Holy Prophet (S) and Imam Ali ('a).

Explaining this holy verse:

'Is he then who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal (32:18),'

exegetes of the Holy Quran report that the reason for the revelation of this holy Quranic verse was that a heated argument took place between Imam Ali (‘a) and Al-Walid ibn ‘Uqbah during which the latter said to Imam Ali (‘a), ‘Silence! You are a body while I am an old man. By Allah, I am more eloquent than you are, better than you are in battlefields, more courageous than you are, and more effective in wars than you are.’

Answering him, Imam Ali (‘a) said, *‘You are no more than a transgressor.’*

Hence, Almighty Allah revealed the involved verse, describing the manners of the two in a comparative way.

When Al-Walid became the governor of Al-Kufah, he used to drink intoxicants openly. He used to spend the whole night in consuming wine with singers. He gave his drinking companion, Abu-Zayd Al-ta’i the Christian, a house he owned at the door of the mosque. This man used to walk through the lines of the performers of prayer in the mosque to reach Al-Walid.

One day, Al-Walid was heavily drunk when he led the congregational Dawn Prayer. He thus offered four units instead of two! In the genuflection and prostration of the prayer, he repeated, ‘Drink and serve me with wine,’ instead of the ritual statements. He then vomited wine in the niche of the mosque and sealed the prayer. Turning his face toward those who followed him in prayer, he asked, ‘May I add more units?’

A group of the virtuous personalities of Al-Kufah hurried to ‘Uthman to complain about the impudent behaviors of his representative. They also brought with them the sealing ring of Al-Walid which they took from his finger while he was drunk. When they met ‘Uthman, he, defending Al-Walid, asked them reproachfully, ‘How you have come to be sure that he was drunk?’

They said, ‘We know the wine that we used to drink before Islam.’

To confirm their testimonies, they gave 'Uthman the sealing ring of Al-Walid. Nevertheless, 'Uthman pushed them heavily and used a very obscene and rude language with them. Extremely enraged, they left 'Uthman and went toward Imam Ali's house to inform him about the incident.

Immediately, Imam Ali ('a) went to 'Uthman and said, *'You have refuted the witnesses and suspended the religious penal laws.'*

'Uthman, anticipating unwelcome consequences, asked, 'What is your opinion?'

Imam Ali ('a) said, *'My opinion is that you should summon your acquaintance (Al-Walid). If they establish testimony against him and he is unable to defend himself by providing evidence, then you must sentence him to the punishment prescribed by the religious law.'*

'Uthman had no other way but to comply with Imam Ali's opinion; he therefore wrote a letter to Al-Walid, ordering him to come to the capital. Once he received the letter, he came to Al-Madinah. Before 'Uthman, the witnesses were present. When they said their testimony, Al-Walid had no way to prove its falsity; as a result, he had to undergo the punishment of drinking wine.

Because of their fear of 'Uthman, none had the audacity to execute the punishment. Imam Ali ('a) stood up and came near Al-Walid, who reviled at the Imam ('a) and said, 'You are imperfect and unjust!' 'Aqil, the Imam's brother, stood up and answered back these insulting words.

Then, Imam Ali ('a) knocked Al-Walid down and whipped him. While 'Uthman flared up with rage, he shouted at the Imam ('a), 'You do not have the right to do this to the man.' In the logic of the religious law, Imam Ali ('a) answered, '*Yes, I do. I even have the right to do more, once this man is proven as transgressor and he has refrained from being subjected to the law of Allah.*'[9]

Another example of 'Uthman's officials was Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi- Sarh, 'Uthman's foster brother. Historicists agree unanimously that this man was one of the most vehement enemies of the Holy Prophet (S). He used to mock at the Holy Prophet (S) who, as a result, declared him as wanted and ordered to be killed wherever he would be found, even if he hung to the curtains of the Holy Ka'bah.

After the conquest of Makkah, Abdullah ibn Sa'd ran away and took refuge with 'Uthman who hid him for a considerable time. After the political settlement in Makkah, 'Uthman brought this man to the Holy Prophet (S) who kept silent for a long time. Finally, the Holy Prophet (S) pardoned him. When 'Uthman left, the Holy Prophet (S) said to his companions, 'I kept silent for such a considerable time only because I wanted one of you to face this man and behead him.'

When 'Uthman appointed Abdullah ibn Sa'd as the governor of Egypt and entrusted with him the missions of leading the congregational prayers and the collection of taxes, this man used a very violent policy with the people of Egypt and showed arrogance and haughtiness. Having been extremely impatient with their ruler, the people of Egypt sent their virtuous persons as delegates to 'Uthman, complaining about him.

'Uthman, responding to them, sent a letter to Abdullah condemning his policies in Egypt. Nevertheless, the man did not respond to 'Uthman; rather, he persisted in persecution and confiscation of their properties. Then, a seven hundred-person delegation from Egypt came to 'Uthman. When they entered the capital, they resided in the Prophet's Mosque and their chief went to some Companions, complaining about 'Uthman.

Imam Ali ('a) went to 'Uthman to solve this problem. He said, 'These people are only asking you to replace Abdullah ibn Sa'd with another man. They have claimed that he had shed inviolable blood there. So, you must dismiss him and judge between them. If he is then proved guilty, you must give them back their right.'

Finally, ‘Uthman had to comply with Imam Ali’s request. When ‘Uthman asked the Egyptian delegation to choose a man as their governor, they chose Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr. So, ‘Uthman had to write an official letter in this respect and sent a group of the Muhajirun and the Ansar to judge between the people of Egypt and Abdullah ibn Sa’d.

However, once the Egyptian delegation left Al-Madinah to Egypt, they, at a place known as Hams, found that ‘Uthman had sent his slave Warash behind them to Egypt. When they searched the slave, they found him carrying a letter from ‘Uthman to Abdullah ibn Sa’d with the handwriting of Marwan ibn Al-Hakam, asking him to persecute the people of Egypt more intensely. They therefore went back to Al-Madinah, the capital, and decided to kill ‘Uthman or depose him.

Another bad example of ‘Uthman’s officials was Mu’awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan. This archenemy of Islam had been the ruler of Syria since the reign of ‘Umar. ‘Uthman fixed him in this position and paved the way to the Umayyads to come to power. Besides Syria, ‘Uthman appointed Mu’awiyah as the governor of Palestine and Hims (or Homs), a district western Syria, and appointed him as the commander-in-chief of the Muslim armies.

He also allowed him to do in Syria whatever he wished. Hence, when people revolted against ‘Uthman and killed him, Mu’awiyah was the strongest and the most effective of all other deputy governors. In conclusion, ‘Uthman helped the Umayyads come to power more than ‘Umar did.

Another example of ‘Uthman’s officials was Sa’id ibn Al-’As. ‘Uthman appointed him as the governor of Al-Kufah after he had dismissed Al-Walid. This man was so impetuous that he did not refrain from committing any sin. He used to despise all principles and values of the religion and the society.

Before the masses, Sa’id once declared that Al-Kufah is no more than a garden owned by the people of Quraysh. This irresponsible

declaration embittered the people of Al-Kufah so much that their chiefs, like Malik Al-Ashtar, condemned Sa'id, saying, 'Do you make the centers of our lances and the gifts of God to us a garden for you and your people? By Allah, if one of you tries to seize it, we will beat him so bitterly.'

In addition to Malik, the other personalities and scholars of this city revolted against Sa'id. When the police officer retorted, they beat him so heavily that he fell in a faint. They then began to spread the offenses of the people of Quraysh and the crimes of the Umayyads and 'Uthman.

Immediately, Sa'id informed 'Uthman of this revolt, and 'Uthman answered back that they should be banished to Syria. Receiving them in Syria, Mu'awiyah detained them in a church, gave them some gifts, debated with them, and recommended them to close their eyes against the misdeeds of the ruling authorities. Nevertheless, they refused to respond to him and insisted on their situation.

Having despaired of convincing them to stop criticizing the ruling authorities, Mu'awiyah wrote a letter to 'Uthman asking him to send these people back to their home town; lest, they would change the minds of the people of Syria. 'Uthman agreed and ordered them to be sent back to Al-Kufah. They did not stop exposing the misdeeds of 'Uthman and Sa'id who, as a result, asked 'Uthman to banish them to another place.

He thus ordered Sa'id to banish them to Hims whose governor treated them so violently that they had to pretend that they would obey the ruling authorities. Hence, 'Uthman ordered the deputy governor of Hims to send them back to their home town.

On their way to Al-Kufah, they turned to the capital to meet 'Uthman personally and complain to him about the physical and mental persecutions they had to suffer in Hims. When they presented themselves before 'Uthman, Sa'id surprised them there. Hence, when they complained to 'Uthman about Sa'id's misdeeds and

asked him to depose him, 'Uthman refused their request and ordered them to obey Sa'id.

They then went back to Al-Kufah and decided not to let Sa'id enter their city ever again. They occupied the building of governorship and armed themselves under the command of Malik Al-Ashtar. When Sa'id came, they faced him violently and prevented him from entering the city. As a result, Sa'id went back to the capital and 'Uthman had to depose him.10

Economical policies of 'Uthman

In the field of economical policy, 'Uthman followed the policy of flattering the famous personalities and giving them precedence to all others. Of course, this policy is in clear violation of the economical system of Islam, which is based on using the public treasury and allowances for meeting the financial needs of the poor and spreading luxury among all Muslims equally.

Applying this policy in his reign, Imam Ali ('a), in an epistle to Qutham ibn Al-'Abbas, said,
*See what has been collected with you of the funds of Allah (in the public treasury) and spend it over the persons with families, the distressed, the starving and the naked, at your end. Then, send the remaining to us for distribution to those who are on this side.*11

'Uthman granted huge sums of money and abundant fortunes of the public treasury to the members of the Banu-Umayyah family, such as Al-Harith ibn Al-Hakam, 12 Abu-Sufyan, 13Sa'id ibn Al-'As,14 Abdullah ibn Khalid, 15 Al- Walid ibn 'Uqbah, 16

Al-Hakam ibn Al-'As whom the Holy Prophet (S) had banished to Al-ta'if because of his vehement animosity and Abu-Bakr and 'Umar refused to allow him back in Makkah, but 'Uthman did 17 and granted him huge sums of money, 18 and Marwan ibn Al-Hakam. 19Besides, 'Uthman granted such huge sums of money to

other persons like Talhah ibn ‘Ubaydullah, 20 Al-Zubayr ibn Al-’Awwam, 21 and Zayd ibn Thabit.22

‘Uthman also granted as fiefs huge lands to those who supported his policy. Historicists also confirm that ‘Uthman took whatever he liked from the public treasury for his family members and himself. For instance, it is said that the public treasury had contained invaluable precious stones, which ‘Uthman took for his daughters and women.23 After ‘Uthman’s assassination, his treasurer had thirty million silver units and one hundred and fifty thousand gold ones.24

Opposition to ‘Uthman

Because of this exorbitant corruption in ‘Uthman’s policies, it was natural for the virtuous Muslims to oppose and criticize him. In fact, there were two oppositionist powers against ‘Uthman; the motive of the virtuous power was ‘Uthman’s violation of the laws and spirit of Islam, while the motive of the other power, represented by ‘A'ishah, Al-Zubayr, and Talhah, was their fear for their personal interests.

The virtuous power that criticized ‘Uthman contained such righteous Companions like ‘Ammar ibn Yasir, Abu-Dharr Al-Ghifari, Abdullah ibn Mas’ud and their likes. When these persons saw ‘Uthman ruining the Prophetic practices, creating innovations in the religion, telling lies, and preferring some people over others unrightfully, they opposed him, demanding with a changeover of his policies, because they cared for nothing but serving Islam and saving Muslims from the danger of such policies.

Facing these persons, ‘Uthman exposed them to the cruelest persecutions. When ‘Uthman appropriated the precious stones of the public treasury and gave them to his daughters and women, Imam Ali (‘a) disapproved of his act and blamed him violently. ‘Ammar ibn Yasir supported Imam Ali (‘a) and rebuked ‘Uthman

as well. ‘Uthman used bad language with ‘Ammar and ordered his constables to arrest and beat him so heavily that he lost consciousness and missed the Midday and Afternoon Prayers.

Upon this situation, all Muslims revolted against ‘Uthman, including ‘A'ishah who took out a few hairs of the Holy Prophet (S), one of his dresses, his sandal, and declared, ‘How swift have you abandoned the practice of your Prophet, while these hairs, dress, and sandals of him have not yet been ragged!’25

When ‘Uthman banished Abu-Dharr to Al-Rabadhah (a village in current Lebanon) because of his ceaseless revolution against his policies and he died there alone, persecuted, and wronged, all Muslims felt sorry for that.

However, ‘Uthman said in the presence of a group of the Companions, ‘Well, may Allah have mercy upon him!’ Here, ‘Ammar cast some words of blame at ‘Uthman who answered ‘Ammar with the most obscene language, 26 expressing that he never regretted banishing Abu-Dharr. Moreover, ‘Uthman ordered his slaves to hit ‘Ammar and then to banish him to Al-Rabadhah where Abu-Dharr had departed life.

When ‘Ammar prepared himself to leave the capital to his exile, the tribe of Makhzum, the allies of ‘Ammar, came to Imam Ali (‘a) and asked him to intercede for ‘Ammar and ask ‘Uthman to cancel his decision. Imam Ali (‘a) thus said to ‘Uthman, *‘Fear Allah! You had already banished a righteous Muslim individual and he died there because of your decision of banishment. Now, do you want to banish his match?’*

These words enraged ‘Uthman who cried at the Imam (‘a), saying, ‘In fact, you are the one who must be banished!’

The Imam (‘a) answered, *‘Dare you do it?’*

Here, the Muhajirun interfered and blamed ‘Uthman for these words. Hence, he responded to them and pardoned ‘Ammar.27

Abu-Dharr-the prominent companion of the Holy Prophet (S), one of the first men who accepted Islam, one of the closest persons to the Holy Prophet (S) who used to confide his secrets to him exclusively,28 one of the four persons whom Almighty Allah loved and ordered His Prophet to love,29 and one of the three persons for whom Paradise longs 30-did not stop criticizing 'Uthman for the corruptive system of rule that he led, although 'Uthman warned him against so more than once.

However, Abu-Dharr believed that it was his duty to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. He used to stop before those whom 'Uthman granted huge fortunes from the public treasury and recite this holy verse:

They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (O Muhammad) of a painful doom. (9:34)

'Uthman therefore decided to banish Abu-Dharr to Syria, which was governed by Mu'awiyah. Once Abu-Dharr saw the terrible violations of Islam committed by Mu'awiyah, he could not keep silent; rather, he revolted and criticized Mu'awiyah on many occasions.

Besides, Abu-Dharr started an enlightenment campaign in Syria through which he exposed the misdeeds of Mu'awiyah and 'Uthman. As a result, Mu'awiyah complained about him to 'Uthman who summoned him. Along the way to the capital, Abu-Dharr was deliberately exposed to various sorts of physical and mental persecutions.

When he was present before 'Uthman, Abu- Dharr declared that the one and only reason for his campaigns against Mu'awiyah was that he wanted to carry out the religious duty of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. When 'Uthman could not overcome this man, he turned to the attendants and said, 'Advise me about this aged liar! Shall I beat, detain, or kill him? He has dis-

persed disunity among the community of the Muslims. Or should I banish him out of the Muslim lands?'

Revolting at this humiliating style, Imam Ali ('a) said, *'O 'Uthman! I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, 'The green skies have never shaded and the dusty lands have never carried one more truthful than Abu-Dharr.'*

However, Imam Ali's intimation did not find any reception in the mind of 'Uthman.

Inattentive to 'Uthman, Abu-Dharr did not stop his campaigns against the Umayyads; therefore, 'Uthman decided to banish him to a derelict land, and he banned bidding farewell to him. Nevertheless, the Holy Prophet's family did not pay attention to this ban; rather, they, accompanied by 'Ammar, saw Abu-Dharr off.

When Marwan saw them, he said to Imam Al-Hasan ('a), 'O Hasan! Have you not known that 'Uthman banned bidding farewell to this man and talking to him? If you have not known, then you must now know.'

Imam Al-Hasan ('a) despised the man and did not answer him.

Then, Imam Ali ('a) attacked Marwan, beat the ears of his riding animal, and shouted at him, saying, *'Make way! May Allah make way to you to Hellfire!'*

Thus, Marwan ran away for fear of Imam Ali ('a) and informed 'Uthman that the Holy Prophet's Household had violated his ban.

Imam Ali ('a) then said a word to Abu-Dharr, expressing his sorrow and shedding light on Abu-Dharr's exceptional personality and efforts in exposing the Umayyad regime under the leadership of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, saying,

O Abu-Dharr! You showed anger in the name of Allah therefore have hope in Him for whom you became angry. The people were afraid of you in the matter of their (pleasure of this) world while you feared them for

your faith. Then leave to them that for which they are afraid of you and get away from them taking away what you fear them about.

How needy are they for what you dissuade them from and how heedless are you towards what they are denying you. You will shortly know who the winner is tomorrow (on the Judgment Day) and who is more enviable. Even if these skies and earth were closed to some individual and he feared Allah, then Allah would open them for him. Only rightfulness should attract you while wrongfulness should detract you. If you had accepted their worldly attractions, they would have loved you and if you had shared in it they would have given you asylum. 31

Imam Al-Hasan, Imam Al-Husayn, and ‘Ammar also said similar words to Abu-Dharr who said in reply,

May Allah have mercy upon you, O the Ahl Al-Bayt! Whenever I see you, I remember the Messenger of Allah (‘a). I have neither entertainment nor company in Al-Madinah except you. I have become a source of harm for ‘Uthman in Al-Hijaz in the same way I was for Mu’awiyah in Syria.

So, he detested that I should be in the neighborhood of his brother and his maternal cousin in the two other regions (i.e. Al-Kufah and Al-Basrah); lest, I would fire up the people against them. He therefore banished me to a region where there is neither supporter nor defender to me except Allah. By Allah, I want no acquaintance save Allah with Whom I fear no loneliness at all.

On his way back from bidding farewell to Abu-Dharr, Imam Ali (‘a) was received by a group of people who notified him about ‘Uthman’s anger with him, because he had violated the ban. Carelessly, Imam Ali (‘a) replied, *‘Worthless is his anger with me.’*

‘Uthman came and shouted at the Imam (‘a), ‘What for did you dismiss my messenger?’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered, *‘Marwan received me to make me go back; so I made him go back. However, I did not break your order.’*

'Uthman asked, 'Have you not been informed that I warned people against seeing Abu-Dharr off?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered, *'Should we carry out any order of you, especially when obedience to Allah and following of the truth are found in breaking that order?'*

'Uthman then requested Imam Ali ('a) to compensate Marwan. Imam Ali ('a) asked, *'What for should I pay him off?'*

'Uthman said, 'You beat the ears of his riding animal.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered, *'My riding animal is nearby; if he wants to beat it in the same way as I beat his riding animal, he may do it. As for me, I swear by Allah, if he swears at me, I will definitely swear at you likewise. If I do, I will not tell a lie; rather, I will say only the truth.'*

'Uthman replied, 'Why will he refrain from swearing at you if you swear at him? By Allah, in my view, you are not better than he is!'

These words injured Imam Ali ('a), because 'Uthman put the Imam ('a) at the same level of Marwan whom the Holy Prophet (S) had described as lizard and son of a lizard, while Imam Ali ('a) occupied in the view of the Holy Prophet (S) the same standing that Prophet Aaron occupied with his brother Prophet Moses. Besides, 'Uthman forgot Imam Ali's efforts in establishing Islam and struggling for its sake.

Then, Imam Ali ('a) replied 'Uthman violently, saying, *'Do you address such words to me? Do you equate me to Marwan? By Allah, I am most surely better than you are, my father better than your father, and my mother better than your mother. These are my arrows prepared for shooting.'* 32

These words silenced 'Uthman although he was extremely infuriated.

'Uthman punished not only 'Ammar and Abu-Dharr, but also other major Companions of the Holy Prophet (S) such as Abdul-

lah ibn Mas'ud. When Al- Walid borrowed much money from the public treasury, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud demanded him to give back these sums, but Al-Walid refused and wrote a letter to 'Uthman informing him about Abdullah's problem with him.

'Uthman, as usual, stood with Al-Walid and reproached Abdullah in a letter in which he said to him, 'You are but our storekeeper!' This word infuriated Abdullah so much that he threw the keys of the house of the public treasury and went back to Al-Madinah. 'Uthman was delivering a sermon when he saw Abdullah ibn Mas'ud coming towards him. He thus said, 'Here comes a worthless and evil creeping animal that vomits and excretes on his own food!'

Abdullah answered, 'I am not such; rather, I am the companion of Allah's Messenger and I participated in the Battle of Badr and paid allegiance to the Holy Prophet under that tree' etc.'

'A'ishah rushed towards 'Uthman, saying, ''Uthman! Do you say such a thing about the companion of Allah's Messenger?'

'Uthman then ordered his constables to throw Abdullah out of the mosque violently. Carrying out 'Uthman's orders, they knocked Abdullah down, causing some of his ribs to be broken.

Upon this situation, Imam Ali ('a) was so agitated that he said to 'Uthman violently, *'Do you do such a thing with the companion of Allah's Messenger for nothing than a word said by Al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah?'*

'Uthman answered, 'No! It is not for this reason; rather, I sent Zubayd to Al- Kufah where Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said to him, 'It is lawful to shed the blood of 'Uthman!''

Imam Ali ('a) said, *'So, you have believed Zubayd's words although he is untrustworthy.'*[33]

Imam Ali ('a) then carried Abdullah ibn Mas'ud to his house and looked after him until he was restored to health.

After that, ‘Uthman parted company with Abdullah, dissociated himself from him, placed him under house arrest, and cut off his share of the allowances.

However, in Abdullah’s final ailment, ‘Uthman visited him, but could not gain his pleasure with him. In his last will, Abdullah instructed that ‘Uthman should never perform the ritual funeral prayer for his body; rather, ‘Ammar ibn Yasir should. Hence, when Abdullah departed life, his funeral processions were made by the Companions without letting ‘Uthman know about it.34

After all that, it was natural that a popular revolution would be set up against ‘Uthman. The Muhajirun and the virtuous Companions wrote a letter to the people of Egypt, appealing for their help to change the ruling regime.

In this letter, they informed the people of Egypt that ‘Uthman had distorted the Book of Allah, cancelled out the religious laws, contradicted the Quranic rules, deformed the Prophetic practices, violated the laws of Abu-Bakr and ‘Umar, misappropriated the public property, and changed the Islamic caliphate into mordacious royalty.35

They then sent another letter to the guards of the borders, informing them that they were more required to amend the religion of Prophet Muhammad (S) after it had been breached by ‘Uthman than guarding the borders.36

Other similar letters were sent to the other regions of the Muslim State. In response to the Companions’ appeal, the chiefs in the other regions sent delegations to study the situation. Hence, Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr and Abd Al-Rahman ibn ‘Udays Al-Balawi headed the Egyptian delegation, Malik Al- Ashtar headed the delegation of Al-Kufah, and Hakim ibn Jabalah headed the delegation of Al-Basrah.

The delegation of Egypt presented a memorandum to ‘Uthman, advising him to fear Allah, feel contrition for his fault, and try to

make a new beginning based on justice and fair ruling.37

When all doors were blocked in the face of 'Uthman, he did not find any means to save him from this ordeal but to take refuge with Imam Ali ('a), who responded to 'Uthman after he had made a condition on 'Uthman that he would commit himself to the laws of the Book of Allah and the practices of the Holy Prophet (S). 'Uthman agreed, and Imam Ali ('a) went to the rebels carrying with him 'Uthman's warranty and commitment to whatever they wanted.

However, when they saw Imam Ali ('a), they first asked him not to interfere, but the Imam ('a) said, 'All your requests will be guaranteed. You will be given what the Book of Allah decides, and all the matters that you have refused will be amended completely that you will no longer need to blame 'Uthman.'

They asked, 'Do you guarantee this for us?' 'Yes, I do,' answered Imam Ali ('a). 'Now, we accept,' answered they. Thus, the chiefs of the delegations, along with Imam Ali ('a), came to 'Uthman and asked him to change his policy into one founded on pure justice and genuine truth. 'Uthman gave them his word.

He then signed a document guaranteeing all their demands by the assurance of Imam Ali ('a). On this document, which was signed in the year AH 35, many prominent persons put their signatures as witnesses.

After they had received copies of this document, the delegations left to their people. Imam Ali ('a) then asked 'Uthman to go out and declare that he would implement whatever they wanted. 'Uthman did and swore to Almighty Allah that he would govern them according to the laws of Allah's Book and the practices of Allah's Messenger. He also pledged that he would distribute the allowances fairly among them without preferring certain people to others.

Unfortunately, ‘Uthman broke his word and breached his promises. Historicists say that the reason behind this breach was that Marwan ibn Al- Hakam, after that incident, blamed ‘Uthman for giving his word to the Egyptians and asked him to declare the breach of that pledge. ‘Uthman first refused Marwan’s request, but the latter insisted so tirelessly that he convinced ‘Uthman to respond to him.

Thus, ‘Uthman gathered the people, ascended the minbar, and said, ‘These Egyptians had revolted according to a false piece of news that they had received about their leader. When they became sure that the news was false, they returned home’’

‘Amr ibn Al-’As interrupted ‘Uthman and said, ‘Fear Allah, O ‘Uthman! You are bringing about perditions to yourself and to ours. Repent before Allah so that we will repent with you!’

Nevertheless, ‘Uthman swore at ‘Amr heavily and refused his advice. From all sides of the mosque where ‘Uthman delivered these words, people cried out, ‘Fear Allah, O ‘Uthman.’38

In the face of these huge condemnations, ‘Uthman collapsed and could not say any further word. He then had to declare repentance once again for he regretted what he had done.

However, ‘Uthman did not quit his corruptive policies; therefore, the rebels once more surrounded him and demanded him to quit his position. Yet, he refused and thought of seeking the help of Mu’awiyah. He therefore sent him a letter, asking for a military power to protect him from the rebels.39

Musawwar ibn Makhramah, who took the letter to Mu’awiyah, said, ‘’Uthman is about to be assassinated. Look carefully into what he is asking you for in this letter.’

Ridiculing him, Mu’awiyah said, ‘I avow that ‘Uthman, first, acted upon what Allah and His Messenger likes and please, but he then

changed; therefore, Allah changed His situation towards him. Can I now stand against what Allah has decided?'40

Thus, Mu'awiyah renounced 'Uthman and refused to respond to him in the very time of his need.

'Uthman sent similar letters to the peoples of the Muslim regions, but none of them came to help him.

The rebels then imposed siege on and surrounded 'Uthman's house, shouting him down and demanding him to resign. In the midst of this ordeal, Marwan went out and cried out at the rebels with these words: 'What do you want? It seems that you have come to usurp something. May your faces be deformed! You only want to divest us of our sovereignty. Leave us!'

These reckless words inflamed the wick of war against 'Uthman. When Marwan's words were conveyed to Imam Ali ('a), he hastened to 'Uthman and said to him,

You have not been pleased with Marwan and he has not been pleased with you only because you deviated from your religion and your intellect, just like the riding camel, which is driven to whence its driver wants. By Allah, Marwan is not a man of (an apposite) opinion with regard to neither his religion nor his personal affairs. By Allah, I do not see but that he will involve you (in troubles) but he will help you withdraw (from them). After this situation of mine, I will never come back to blame you. You have wasted your honor and you have been betrayed.

Then, Imam ('a) left 'Uthman while the rebels had already surrounded him. Na'ilah, 'Uthman's wife, addressed Marwan and the members of the Umayyad family, saying, 'By Allah, you will most certainly kill 'Uthman and orphan his children.'

The fires of revolution flared up after the rebels' patience had run out and 'Uthman had not resigned. The rebels surrounded 'Uthman's house unsheathing their swords. Marwan came out of the house to defend 'Uthman, but 'Urwah ibn Shaym Al-Laythi faced

him and stroke him with his sword on his back and he fell to the ground.

The rebels then climbed the wall into ‘Uthman’s house and faced some of the Umayyads who had prepared themselves for defending him. A violent conflict took place between the two parties and Khalid ibn ‘Uqbah ran away. Few others from ‘Uthman’s party were killed. Then, the relatives of ‘Uthman ran away and left ‘Uthman alone. A group of Muslims, headed by Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr, advanced to kill ‘Uthman.

They stabbed him several times and sat on his chest to behead him. However, ‘Uthman’s wife threw herself on her husband’s body; therefore, the rebels left him stained with his blood. The rebels then threw ‘Uthman’s body on a dunghill for three days. Some of ‘Uthman’s relatives asked Imam Ali (‘a) to interfere so that ‘Uthman’s dead body would be buried. Imam Ali (‘a) did, and the rebels agreed.

Thus, ‘Uthman’s dead body was buried in the darkness of night and in a cemetery of the Jews, because the Ansar did not allow his dead body to be buried in a cemetery of Muslims.

In fact, the biggest winner of ‘Uthman’s assassination was the Umayyads who, as well as other opportunist people like Al-Zubayr, Talhah, and ‘A'ishah, then raised ‘Uthman’s shirt as slogan, claiming that they were demanding with reTalibation.

- 1. Tarikh Al-Ya’qubi 2:140; Ibn Kathir: Al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah 7:148.
- 2. Tarikh At-Tabari 4:262.
- 3. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi’l-Tarikh 3:38.
- 4. This is an indication of the following holy Quranic verses: ‘Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with ‘Ad; the people of Iram, possessors of lofty buildings the like of which were not created in the other cities; and with (the people of) Thamud, who hewed out the rocks in the valley; and with Pharaoh, the lord of hosts who committed inordinacy in the

cities; so, they made great mischief therein? Therefore, your Lord let down upon them a portion of the chastisement. Most surely, your Lord is as a guardian on a watch-tower. (89/6-14)'

- 5. Ibn Hajar, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Tamyiz Al-Sahabah 3:192.
- 6. Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 2:223
- 7. Ibn Sa'd, Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra 1:186.
- 8. Al-Amini, Al-Ghadir 8:273.
- 9. Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 2:225.
- 10. Tarikh Al-Tabari 5:85; Tarikh Abi'l-Fida' 1:68.
- 11. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 67.
- 12. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:52.
- 13. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:67.
- 14. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:28.
- 15. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:145.
- 16. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:30.
- 17. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:41.
- 18. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:28.
- 19. Tarikh Abi'l-Fida' 1:168; Al-Sirah Al-Halabiyyah 2:87.
- 20. Tarikh Al-Tabari 5:139.
- 21. Ibn Sa'd, Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra 3:79.
- 22. Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 1:334.
- 23. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:36.
- 24. Ibn Sa'd, Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra 3:53.
- 25. History of Islam has recorded 'A'ishah's famous saying about 'Uthman: 'Kill Na'thal, for he had abandoned faith.' [Al-Sirah Al-Halabiyyah 3:356.]
- 26. It is ironic that this caliph pronounces words that are too abusive to be quoted, while he is claimed that the angels feel shy of him!
- 27. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:150; Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:54.
- 28. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 8:15.
- 29. Sunan Ibn Majah 1:53.
- 30. Al-Haythami, Majma' Al-Zawa'id 9:330.
- 31. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 129.
- 32. Al-Amini, Al-Ghadir 8:297.

- 33. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:36.
- 34. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala Al-Sahihayn 7:163; Ibn Hajar, Al-Bidayah wa’l-Nihayah 3:13.
- 35. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa’l-Siyasah 1:35.
- 36. Tarikh At-Tabari 5:115; Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi’l-Tarikh 5:70.
- 37. Tarikh At-Tabari 5:111; Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:65.
- 38. Tarikh Al-Tabari 5:110; Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:74.
- 39. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi’l-Tarikh 5:67; Tarikh Al-Ya’qubi 2:150.
- 40. Al-Buladhari, Futuh Al-Buldan, 2:218.

The Reign Of Imam ‘Ali

Imam Ali (‘a) received the news of ‘Uthman’s assassination with much anxiety, because he had known the consequences of this incident. He knew that the Umayyads and the perverted powers would play with the card of ‘Uthman’s bloodshed in order to seize power and usurp the fortunes of the Muslim State.

Another reason for Imam Ali’s concern was that he knew that he was the first candidate to caliphate; and if he came to power, he would follow a policy based on truth and pure justice and he would apply the laws of the Holy Quran and the practices of the Holy Prophet (S) to people, which meant that he would set aside the greedy and the thieves from the governmental offices. As a result, the perverted powers would revolt against him and work toward frustrating his reformative plans.

Imam Ali Refuses Caliphate

Most certainly, Imam Ali ('a) did not have any desire for holding the position of caliphate as long as it means arrogance, fondness of authority, and gaining the fortunes of the country, because such goals were forbidden and illegal in the Imam's view, since his one and only goal was to put into action all nobilities, high moral standards, and pleasure of the community, to save the people from poverty and deprivation, and to spread luxury and security among the subjects.

The masses surrounded Imam Ali ('a) and asked him to hold the reins of government, but the Imam ('a) answered,

I am by no means in need for ruling over you. I will accept anyone else you will choose for this position.

On another occasion, Imam Ali ('a) demonstrated the motives that made him dispute with the previous caliphs, saying,

O Allah! You know that what we did was not to seek power nor to acquire anything from the vanities of the world. We rather wanted to restore the signs of Your religion and to usher prosperity into Your cities so that the oppressed among Your creatures might be safe and You forsaken commands might be established. O Allah! I am the first who leaned (towards You) and who heard and responded (to the call of Islam). No one preceded me in prayer except the Prophet.

You certainly know that he who is in charge of honor, life, booty, (enforcement of) legal commandments and the leadership of the Muslims should not be a miser as his greed would aim at their wealth, nor be ignorant as he would then mislead them with his ignorance, nor be of rude behavior who would estrange them with his rudeness, nor should he deal unjustly with wealth thus preferring one group over another, nor should he accept a bribe while taking decisions, as he would forfeit (others) rights and hold them up without finality, nor should he ignore the Prophetic traditions as he would ruin the people.[1]

Nevertheless, the masses insistently said to Imam Ali ('a), 'We do not have any leader except you. We will choose none but you.'

Imam Ali (‘a), again, did not pay any attention to their demands; rather, he insisted on refusing their offer, because he had already predicted the coming problems and seditious matters that would be created by the perverted powers.

Conference Of The Military Forces

After Imam Ali (‘a) had refused to assume power, the military forces held a meeting in which they discussed the dangers that would befall the Muslim community if they would remain without a leader. They therefore summoned the people of Al-Madinah and the prominent personalities and threatened that they would kill Imam Ali (‘a), Talhah, and Al-Zubayr, creating a massacre as a result, if a man would not be appointed as the caliph.2

Hence, the people of Al-Madinah hurried fearfully to Imam Ali (‘a) and shouted, ‘Pledge of allegiance! Homage! Can’t you see what has befallen Islam and what tribulations we have encountered because of the people of the villages?’

Once again, Imam Ali (‘a) insisted on refusing their proposal, saying,

Leave me and find another one!

Expressing the reasons for his refusal, Imam Ali (‘a) added,

We are facing a matter which has (several) faces and colors, which neither hearts can stand nor intelligence can accept. Clouds are hovering over the sky, and faces are not discernible. You should know that if I respond to you I would lead you as I know and would not care about whatever one may say or abuse. If you leave me then I am the same as you are. It is possible I would listen to and obey whomever you make in charge of your affairs. I am better for you as a counselor than as chief. 3

Nevertheless, people poured forth on Imam Ali (‘a) from all sides, demanding him to accept assuming caliphate.

Expressing the insistence of the people, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

At that moment, nothing took me by surprise but the crowd of people rushing to me. It advanced towards me from every side like the mane of the hyena so much so that Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn were crushed and both the ends of my shoulder garment were torn. They collected around me like the herd of sheep and goats.[4]

Finally, Imam Ali (‘a) asked for respite to the next day so that he would think about the matter ponderously. Only then did the people leave him.

Imam Ali Accepts Caliphate

Having contemplated the matter thoughtfully, Imam Ali (‘a) concluded that the public interest of Muslims necessitated that he would assume caliphate; otherwise, one of the infidels of the Umayyads would jump to hold the position. He thus said,

By Allah, I have not advanced to accept caliphate for any other reason than that I anticipated that a goat from the Umayyads would leap to play in the Book of Allah the Almighty and All-majestic. [5]

Swearing Allegiance To Imam Ali

The next morning, the masses hurried to the mosque, waiting impatiently for the Imam’s acceptance. Before long, Imam Ali (‘a) came while the two grandsons of the Holy Prophet (S) were to his two sides and the other pure Companions, like ‘Ammar and Malik, surrounded him. The voices of the masses rose with cries of complete support to the Imam (‘a) who, then, ascended the minbar and delivered these words to the masses:

O people! Verily, no one has any word about this affair of you except the one you choose as leader. Yesterday, you and I left after I had been unpleased to respond to your request. Nevertheless, you insisted that I

should be your chief. Behold! I am not allowed to take for myself a single dirham more than what you take. If you wish, I will sit (on the rule seat) to preside over you; otherwise, I will not accept the pledge of allegiance made by any one of you.

Once again, cries from all sides of the mosque rose to declare their consistent insistence on selecting Imam Ali (‘a) for leadership. They thus said, ‘We still bear the same idea of yesterday.’

The masses then shoved one another to swear allegiance to the Imam (‘a). Talhah also advanced to swear allegiance to Imam Ali (‘a) with his evil hand, which is the same hand that breached allegiance afterwards. Imam Ali (‘a) saw an evil omen in Talhah’s homage; he therefore expressed,

He (i.e. Talhah) is too immoral to keep this allegiance. Thus, he will very soon breach it.’

Allegiance to Imam Ali (‘a) was sworn by the military forces from the people of Egypt and Iraq as well as the people of the other regions, the warriors of the Battle of Badr, the Muhajirun, and the Ansar.6

In fact, no other caliph has ever gained such popular and massive homage. Hence, homage to Imam Ali was not a slip 7 nor was it made by nomination of the previous caliph, nor was it restricted to the selection of less-than-ten persons!

Exultant Joy Of Muslims

Muslims were very happy for swearing allegiance to Imam Ali (‘a); this exultant joy spread all over the Islamic world, because the right has regained its position, the state of justice has been established, and caliphate has been assumed by the father of orphans and the supporter of the deprived and the oppressed.

Talking about the exultant joy of people on this occasion, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

You drew out my hand towards you for allegiance but I held it back and you stretched it but I contracted it. Then you crowed over me as the thirsty camels crowd on the watering cisterns on their being taken there, so much so that shoes were torn, shoulder-cloths fell away and the weak got trampled, and the happiness of people on their allegiance to me was so manifested that small children felt joyful, the old staggered (up to me) for it, the sick too reached for it helter skelter and young girls ran for it without veils.[8]

Support Of The Companions

The most prominent companions of the Holy Prophet (S) rushed to declare their full support of Imam Ali (‘a).

Thabit ibn Qays stopped before the Imam (‘a) and said, ‘O Amir Al-Mu'minin! By Allah, if they had preceded you in assuming the position of leadership, they had never preceded you in religiousness. If they had forgone you, you have now caught them. They were what they were, and you are what you are.

Your position is never concealed and your standing is never ignored. They always needed you since they were unaware of many things, but you never need anyone, because of your comprehensive knowledge.’

Khuzaymah ibn Thabit advanced towards Imam Ali (‘a) and said, ‘O Amir Al- Mu'minin! We have not found any one suitable for assuming this position save you. In fact, we will not resort to anyone but you. Apart from our opinion about you, you are most certainly the foremost in belief, the most knowledgeable of all people with regard to Almighty Allah, and the closest of all believers to Allah’s Messenger. You share people in everything they enjoy, but people never share you in what you have.’

Sa'sa'ah ibn Sawhan, addressing Imam Ali ('a), said, 'O Amir Al-Mu'minin! By Allah, you have beautified the position of caliphate, but it has never beautified you. You have raised it, but it has never raised you. In fact, caliphate needs you more than you need it.'9

Malik Al-Ashtar delivered this sermon to the Muslims: 'O people! This (Ali) is the successor of all the prophets' successors, the real inheritor of the knowledge of the prophets, the owner of extreme courage and benefit, and the one who received his sufferings most nicely. The Book of Allah has testified to Ali's faith and the Messenger of Allah has testified to his being awarded Paradise.

All virtues are perfect in Ali, and none of the past or the coming generations can ever doubt his preference in Islam, knowledge, and righteousness.'

Abd Al-Rahman Al-Jamhi composed some poetic verses in which he demonstrated the fact that Muslims had sworn allegiance to the one who would protect their religion; the one who is chaste in his behavior, and far above any defect. He also called Muslims to adhere firmly to their allegiance to Imam Ali ('a), for he is the successor and cousin of the Chosen Prophet (S) and he was the first to pray to and believe in Almighty Allah.

'Uqbah ibn 'Amr then stood up and praised Imam Ali's unparalleled virtues, saying, 'Imam Ali ('a) was unmatched at all situations, such as his situation on that day of Al-'Aqabah and that day when Muslims swore allegiance to the Holy Prophet (S) and he accepted it from them; therefore, it was called the allegiance of utter pleasure (*ridwan*). Imam Ali ('a) is the guide to the truth in an unprecedented way. Bias is never expected from him, and he is never feared to lack knowledge.'

The Congratulating Delegations

Delegations from the other Muslim regions came to Al-Madinah to declare their support of Imam Ali's government and to show

loyalty to him. Among these congratulators were a delegation from Yemen, the tribes of Hamdan, the tribes of Juhaynah, and the tribes of Bujaylah.

This is another distinctive feature of Imam Ali's caliphate, since none of the previous caliphs had gained such support and reinforcement.

Congregational Supplications For Imam Ali

Imam Ali ('a) is the first caliph for whom people used to implore Almighty Allah's support and victory from the mosques. The first to pray for Imam Ali ('a) from the minbar of a mosque was Abdullah ibn 'Abbas who said, 'O Allah, please grant Ali aid to establish the truth.'

Gloom Of The People Of Quraysh

The people of Quraysh received the news of Imam Ali's assuming caliphate with very much panic and disorder, because they would never forget that Imam Ali ('a) had killed their chiefs for the sake of Islam. They were full of malice and fury toward him.

In addition, they knew that Imam Ali ('a) would follow a course due to which they would be interrogated and deprived of the great fortunes they had usurped from the funds of people and that he would oppose caste and social group. From this cause, they stood in the face of Imam Ali's government and rebelled against him.

Leading the Umayyads, Al-Walid hurried to swear allegiance to Imam Ali ('a) on the condition that the Imam ('a) would close his eyes against the fortunes that they had illegally got from the public treasury during the reign of 'Uthman. Hence, Al-Walid said to

the Imam (‘a), ‘You killed our family members and our heroes. As for me, you killed my father in the Battle of Badr.

As for Sa’id, you killed his father in the same battle, while his father was the light of Quraysh. As for Marwan, you reviled at his father and condemned ‘Uthman for he had embraced him. Now, we will swear allegiance to you on condition that you will forgive us for the fortunes we are possessing, allow us to keep what we are currently having in our hands (i.e. governmental offices), and to kill the slayers of ‘Uthman.’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

As for what you have mentioned regarding my killings amongst you, it was the truth, not I, that killed them.

As for your request that I should forgive you for the fortunes you are now possessing, I do not have the right to free you or any others from violating the right of Allah.

As for allowing you to keep what you are now holding, justice will judge in what is the right of Allah and the Muslims.

As for your request to kill the slayers of ‘Uthman, if I am required to kill them today, then I will be required to kill them tomorrow. However, I pledge to you that I will judge amongst you according to the Book of Allah and the practice of His Messenger. Whoever is too narrow to accept the truth, is too narrower to accept the wrong. You may now leave me and see your own affairs. 10

The people of Quraysh formed a difficult test for Imam Ali (‘a). Expressing his tribulation because of these people, Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

What (cause of conflict) is there between the people of Quraysh and me? By Allah, I have fought them when they were unbelievers and I shall fight them when they will have been misled. I shall be the same for them today as I was for them yesterday. By Allah, I shall split the wrong until

I extract right from its flanks. So, convey this to the people of Quraysh: Let them make noise as loudly as they can.

Some persons absented themselves from swearing allegiance to Imam Ali (‘a). About this group, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

These people failed to stand up with the truth and did not rise with the wrong. 11

These persons were namely Sa’d ibn Abi-Waqqas, Abdullah ibn ‘Umar, Hassan ibn Thabit, Ka’b ibn Malik, Maslamah ibn Mukhallad, Abu-Sa’id Al- Khidri, Muhammad ibn Maslamah, Al-Nu’man ibn Bashir, Zayd ibn Thabit, Suhayb ibn Sinan, Salamah ibn Salamah, Usamah ibn Zayd, Qudamah ibn Mas’un, and Al-Mughirah ibn Shu’bah.12

As for Sa’d ibn Abi-Waqqas, he excused that the question was not very obvious for him.

As for Abdullah ibn ‘Umar whose heart was full of malice towards Imam Ali (‘a), he said to the Imam (‘a), ‘O Ali, fear Allah and do not jump to the leadership of the community without consultation!’

However, Abdullah then regretted this situation very much that he said on his deathbed, ‘I will leave this world while I feel regret for nothing except my failure to swear allegiance to Ali.’

Abdullah lived after that incident a long lifetime during which Almighty Allah punished and humiliated him severely. When Abd Al-Malik ibn Marwan came to power, Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf took the people’s homage on his behalf. Abdullah ibn ‘Umar came and stood at the last of the row of people who were to swear allegiance, so that none would see him. Then, Al-Hajjaj could recognize him.

He despised him and said, ‘Why did you fail to swear allegiance to Abu-Turab (i.e. Imam Ali). Now, you have come in the rear of

people to swear allegiance to Abd Al-Malik! You are so worthless that I will not extend my hand towards you to take homage from you. Here is my foot! Shake my foot and swear allegiance!' Abdullah ibn 'Umar did.

Confiscation Of The Usurped Fortunes

The first act Imam Ali ('a) undertook immediately after assuming caliphate was that he issued a decision of confiscating all the fiefs that 'Uthman had granted to the Umayyads and reacquiring all the fortunes that he had gifted them, because they were taken wrongly. Thus, all the properties of 'Uthman were confiscated, including his sword and armor.

This decision stimulated the wrath of the Umayyads and the horror of those whom 'Uthman had granted huge sums of money, including Talhah and Al- Zubayr.

For this reason, these opportunist powers showed signs of schism and rebellion and declared armed insurgence against Imam Ali's government.

Deposition Of Deputy Governors

Another procedure that Imam Ali ('a) took was that he deposed the deputy governors whom 'Uthman had appointed while they spread injustice and corruption among Muslims. The Imam ('a) deposed all the Umayyads from the ruling system of his government, because keeping them in their offices would mean admission of persecution and tyranny. Without delay, Imam Ali ('a) deposed Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan from the governorship of Syria, since Mu'awiyah was the strongest among 'Uthman's deputy governors.

However, some companions of the Imam (‘a) suggested to him that he would keep Mu’awiyah in his office until all situations would be established compactly. Imam Ali (‘a) refused and declared that he would never flatter anyone in the religious affairs.

One day, Ziyad ibn Hanzalah visited the Imam (‘a) and asked, ‘O Amir Al- Mu'minin! What for should we invade Syria? Lenience and respite seem better for us.’

The Imam (‘a) answered,

Whenever you have together a smart heart, a sharp sword, and a disdainful spirit, all wrongdoings will evade you.

Imam Ali (‘a) then mobilized his forces to invade Syria and annihilate Mu’awiyah, but he was surprised by the rebellion of Talhah, Al-Zubayr, and ‘A'ishah. He thus dedicated all his efforts to this issue and left to Al-Basrah to save it from the evils of these persons.

Imam Ali’s Internal Policy

Imam Ali (‘a) worked very hard for running the affairs of people through a bright policy founded on pure justice and perfect truth. He endeavored to spread luxury and security in the society and to distribute the fortunes among people equitably, away from preferring some people to others.

Equitability

In all of the stages of his rule, Imam Ali (‘a) adopted the policy of equitability and the establishment of justice among the subjects.

In allowances, Imam Ali (‘a) equalized all people with one another; he preferred neither an Arab to a non-Arab, a Muslim to a non-Muslim, nor a relative to a non-relative. This perfect equality

created the criticism of the capiTalibst powers that, as a result, waged war against the Imam (‘a).

The Imam (‘a) ordered all his officials and deputy governors to implement the policy of perfect equality among all people in judgment and other fields. In his epistles to one of his officials, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Behave humbly with the people and keep yourself lenient. Meet them large-heartedly and accord them equal treatment so that the big should not expect injustice from you in their favor and the low should not be despondent of your justice to them. Allah the Sublime will certainly question you, O community of His creatures, about your actions, small or big, open or concealed. If He punishes you, it is because you have been oppressive; and if He forgives, then it is because He is the Most Generous.[13]

Equality In Rights And Duties

Among the other aspects of equality that Imam Ali (‘a) put into effect was equality in rights and duties. He never exempted the strong from any duty that was made incumbent upon the weak; rather, all citizens were equal before his justice.

Adopting The Life Styles Of The Poor

Another political program that Imam Ali (‘a) practiced was his adopting a style of life that was equal to the styles of the poor and the weak among his subjects. He therefore shared them in harsh living and in vicissitudes of time.

Expressing this program, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Shall I be content with being called Amir Al-Mu'minin (The Leader of the Believers), although I do not share with the people the hardships of the world? Or shall I be an example for them in the distresses of life? I have not been created to keep myself busy in eating good foods like the

tied animal whose only worry is his fodder or like a loose animal whose activity is to swallow. It fills its belly with its feed and forgets the purpose behind it. Shall I be left uncontrolled to pasture freely, or draw the rope of misguidance or roam aimlessly in the paths of bewilderment? 14

Cancellation Of The Habit Of Taking Pride In The Ancestors

Imam Ali ('a) cancelled out one of the loathsome habits that the Arab people used to do; namely, taking pride in the ancestors, mutual boasting, and vying in the multiplication of wealth and sons.15

He ('a) thus taught them that vying must be in good action and the favors that one does to his homeland and society so as to contribute to the development of the intellectual and social aspects of life. Any other vying is in fact worthless and it leads to nothing but mirage.

Forbiddance Of Playing Chess

Imam Ali ('a) also disallowed his officials to play chess in the offices of the government. One day, he passed by some people who were engaged in playing chess. He, quoting this holy verse, said to them,

'What are these images to whose worship you cleave. (21:52)'

He then turned over the chessboard.16

Forbiddance Of Sitting On The Public Ways

Imam Ali ('a) also forbade the people of Al-Kufah from sitting on the public ways aimlessly, because this act is expected to bring about violation of people's chastity. However, the people of Al-Kufah talked to him to cancel this decision; therefore, the Imam

(‘a) said, *‘I will cancel it if you guarantee commitment to this condition.’*

‘What is your condition, Amir Al-Mu'minin?’ they asked.

The Imam (‘a) said, *‘You must lower down your sights (against what you are forbidden to look at), respond to the greetings of others, and guide the lost people.’*

The Imam (‘a) left them after they had committed to him that they would abide by his condition.

Prohibition Of Intoxicants

As for intoxicants, which are the key to all vices, Imam Ali (‘a) adopted all procedures to prevent the circulation of intoxicants among people. He is also reported to have set to fire a whole village in Al-Kufah where intoxicants were sold.

Establishment Of Detention Centers

Imam Ali (‘a) is the first to make a detention center, which he called nafi’ (*i.e. beneficial*). However, the building of this center was not too firm to prevent the detainees from leaving it. The Imam (‘a) therefore destroyed the building and built another one he called *nahis.*

Establishment Of House Of Complaints

For those who could not present themselves before the ruling authorities in order to make complaints, Imam Ali (‘a) established for them a building that he called *bayt Al-masalim* (*House of Complaints*) that he himself used to supervise in order that no one else would reach there and have a look at the people’s complaints. After reading these complaints, Imam Ali (‘a) used to summon the wrong party and give back the wronged people their dues.

The Military Police

Imam Ali (‘a) establish a police system whose mission was to maintain security and to supervise the civil events. Giving the name of *Shurtat Al- Khamis* to this system, Imam Ali (‘a) chose the best men in faith and religiousness to join this power, such as Habib ibn Musahir and ‘Ifaq ibn Al- Musayh Al-Fazari.17

Unseemly Dress

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) saw a man putting unseemly attire that had a long tail. He (‘a) said to him, ‘Shorten this tail. If you do, you will seem to be cleaner, more enduring, and more pious.’18

A Record For People’s Needs

Imam Ali (‘a) issued an order of opening a record in which people’s needs should be registered without mentioning their names. In this respect, he (‘a) said,

*Whoever of you needs something, may provide it before me in a concealed document so that you will be avoided exposing yourselves to beggary.*19

The Police Commissioner-In-Chief

Ma’qil ibn Qays Al-Riyahi, one of the most virtuous personalities of his time, was appointed by Imam Ali (‘a) as the police commissioner-in-chief.

The Clerk

Sa’id ibn Nimran, the chief of the Hamdan tribe,20 was appointed by Imam Ali (‘a) as his clerk.

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have directed his scribes to write in small and closely written script without leaving much space be-

tween letters and words [to save stationery] and not to eulogize him.21

Frankness And Honesty

One of the most prominent features of Imam Ali's policy was that he abode by frankness and honesty in all of the aspects of his life. He never played a trick on anybody, never equivocate, and never flattered anybody at the expense of his religious morals; rather, he followed the same course of his brother and cousin; namely the Holy Prophet (S). Had Imam Ali ('a) used the political traditions that were circulative in his time, caliphate would not have reached 'Uthman ibn 'Affan.

When Abd Al-Rahman ibn 'Awf insisted on the Imam ('a) to pay homage to him on condition that he would follow the policy of Abu-Bakr and 'Umar, the Imam ('a) refused and insisted that he would follow the policy inferred from the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

Imam Ali's conscience would never cheat or try to deceive in order to come to power; rather, he had forsaken power and refused all its seductive effects. Very often, he used to express the pains he had to encounter because of the rivalry of the people of Quraysh. He used to say,

*Alas! They are playing tricks on me although they know for sure that I have full acquaintance with their tricks. I have already anticipated their tricks. However, I know for sure that trickery and deception lead to Hell-fire. Therefore, I stand their trickeries and I never do what they do.*22

Answering those who claimed that the Imam ('a) lacked familiarity with the management of the political affairs, while Mu'awiyah was experienced in this field, Imam Ali ('a) said,

By Allah, Mu'awiyah is not more cunning than I am, but he deceives and commits evil deeds. Had I not been hateful of deceit, I would have

been the most cunning of all men. But (the fact is that) every deceit is a sin and every sin is disobedience (of Allah), and every deceitful person will have a banner by which he will be recognized on the Judgment Day. By Allah, I cannot be made forgetful by strategy, nor can I be overpowered by hardships.[23]

On another occasion, Imam Ali (‘a) condemned those people who do not refrain from using any means, be it legal or not, to come to power and then claim these acts to be a sort of cunning. The Imam (‘a) thus says about them,

O people! Surely, fulfillment of pledge is the twin of truth. I do not know a better shield (against the assaults of sin) than it. One who realizes the reality of return (to the next world) never betrays. We are in a period when most of the people regard betrayal as wisdom. In these days, the ignorant people call it excellence of cunning.

What is the matter with them? Allah may destroy them. One who has been through thick and thin of life finds the excuses to be preventing him from orders and prohibitions of Allah but he disregards them despite capability (to succumb to them and follows the commands of Allah), while one who has no restraints of religion seizes the opportunity (and accepts the excuses for not following the commands of Allah).[24]

Cancellation Of Popular Festivals

Imam Ali (‘a) did not pay any attention to the popular festivals. One day, when he was on his journey back from Al-Basrah immediately after the cessation of the Battle of the Camel, he passed by the city of Al-Mada'in whose people came out congregationally to receive him with the women’s shrills and the men’s trilling cries of joy.

Surprised by such behaviors, Imam Ali (‘a) asked about this festival. They said, ‘We usually receive our kings with such festivals.’ The Imam (‘a) answered, ‘I am not a king; rather, I am just like any one of you. My duty is to establish truth and justice among

you.' The Imam ('a) did not leave that place before these crowds had separated.

Imam Ali Executes The Religious Punishment On A Loyal Poet

Al-Najashi was a talented poet who used to praise Imam Ali ('a), since poets in these ages were the spokesmen of the community and the one and only mass medium. One day, this poet was seduced by a licentious man to drink wine in the month of Ramadan, while all Muslims were observing the obligatory fasting.

When these two men became drunk, they vied in boasting with one another and their voices became so loud that a neighbor could hear them and recognize the situation. He therefore ran towards Imam Ali ('a) and informed against them. The Imam ('a) sent his police to arrest them; so, Al-Najashi was arrested while the other man could escape.

When he was presented before Imam Ali ('a), the Imam said to him in a strict language, *'Woe to you! We are observing fasting while you are not!'*

Hence, the Imam ('a), executing the religious punishment on this man, ordered him to be lashed eighty lashes. The Imam ('a) then ordered that twenty more lashes should be added.

Al-Najashi asked about the reason, and the Imam ('a) said, *'These twenty lashes are for your challenge of Almighty Allah in the month of Ramasan.'*

The Imam ('a) then attired Al-Najashi with a short trousers and demonstrated him before people as a sign of humiliation so that he would not do it again, although this man had many times praised Imam Ali ('a) in his poetry.[25]

The Imam Is Just Like The Feeble People

According to the philosophy of Imam Ali (‘a), a ruler must imitate the most feeble people of his subjects in food, dress, and house. He (‘a) is thus reported to have said,

Verily, as Allah the All-exalted has made me the leader of His creatures, He imposed upon me constriction in my personal affairs, my food, my drink, and my dress just like the feeble people, so that the poor will pattern after my poverty and the rich will not be made despotic due to his richness.[26]

In the same connection, Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

Certainly, Allah the Sublime has made it obligatory on true leaders that they should maintain themselves at the level of low people so that the poor do not cry over their poverty.[27]

In the view of Imam Ali (‘a), a ruler is no more than a caretaker whose responsibility is to drive people to decency, supply them with their needs, reform their affairs, and guide them to the straightest path.

Method Of Conversing With The Imam

In one of his speeches to his companions, Imam Ali (‘a), teaching them how to speak with him, said,

Do not address me in the manner despots are addressed. Do not evade me as the people of passion are (to be) evaded, do not meet me with flattery and do not think that I shall take it ill if a true thing is said to me, because the person who feels disgusted when truth is said to him or a just matter is placed before him would find it more difficult to act upon them.

Therefore, do not abstain from saying a truth or pointing out a matter of justice because I do not regard myself above erring. I do not escape erring in my actions but that Allah helps me (in avoiding errors) in matters in which He is more powerful than I.

Certainly, I and you are slaves owned by Allah, other than Whom there is no Lord except Him. He owns our selves, which we do not own. He took us from where we were towards what means prosperity to us. He altered our straying into guidance and gave us intelligence after blindness.[28]

These words overflow with the most supreme pictures of justice and virtue. The following are examples of the teachings mentioned in these words of Imam Ali (‘a):

1. The Imam (‘a) instructed people not to project great titles and stately descriptions on the ruler, since such words are said to the tyrants and the adorers of rule and authority.

2. He (‘a) instructed that people should not associate with their rulers by means of flattery and courtesy; rather, they should speak frankly and provide advices to the rulers, because flattery is a sort of social hypocrisy.

3. He (‘a) confirmed that people should not believe that their leaders hate listening to the truth and complying with justice.

4. He (‘a) directed people to convey to their rulers only the issues that achieve public interest.

5. He (‘a) encouraged people to pronounce loudly the truth and to face the ruling authorities in order to force them to carry out their duties and responsibilities completely.

These are a few, yet important, points inferred from the previous speech of Imam Ali (‘a), the pioneer of human thought and the founder of the human rights.

Imam Ali’s Financial Policy

Unlike all other rulers, Imam Ali (‘a) had his own program of distributing the public funds. He believed that these funds belonged

to Almighty Allah and to the Muslims equally; therefore, they must be spent in fields that develop their livelihoods and save them from misery and destitution. Not only were Muslims given from these funds but also non-Muslims had shares, according to Imam Ali's financial plan, because he took into more consideration citizenship than religion.

In the view of Imam Ali ('a), penury was a social devastating calamity that must be eliminated through all means possible. He ('a) is thus reported to have said,

Had poverty been a man, I would certainly have killed him.

Distribution Of Funds

In the field of distributing the public funds, Imam Ali ('a) followed the course of immediate distribution. Hence, as soon as funds entered the public treasury after they had been collected as obligatory taxes, the Imam ('a) would hurry to distribute them equally among the beneficiaries and to spend them in the fields of constructing lands and reformation of irrigation.

Historicists state that Ibn Al-Nabbah, the treasurer, once came to Imam Ali ('a) and said, 'O Amir Al-Mu'minin! The public treasury is now full of yellow (i.e. golden) and white (i.e. silver) units.' The Imam ('a) astoundingly said, 'Allah is the Most Great!' Leaning on Ibn Al-Nabbah, the Imam ('a) hurried to the public treasury house. There, he cited this poetic verse as example to express his own feelings:

This is my yield and the best of it is still in it. Every yielder will have his hand able to reach his mouth.[29]

The Imam ('a) then ordered the seven divisions of the army from people of Al- Kufah [30] to be there in an instant. When they were present, the Imam ('a) starting distributing these units among them while repeating these words:

O yellow (coins)! O white (coins)! Deceive someone else!

Thus, no single unit remained in the public treasury.

He (‘a) then ordered the house of the public treasury to be swept and cleaned.
He then offered a two-unit prayer there.[31]

On another occasion, after Imam Ali (‘a) had distributed the entire quantity of money that came to him, only a loaf of bread remained. He then divided it into seven parts and gave these parts to the people.

On another occasion, some skins of honey came to the public treasury; so, the Imam (‘a) distributed them among the beneficiaries. After that, he gathered the orphans and fed them with the leftover of that honey.

Equality In Allowances

Imam Ali (‘a) followed a special method of distributing the allowances; namely, the method of equality of all people. He did not give precedence to any class over the other. Because of this method, the Imam (‘a) had to encounter many crises and difficulties. His army went up against him, the prominent and chief persons renounced him, and the capiTalibst powers of Quraysh who used to appropriate the allowances during the reigns of the previous caliphs opposed him.

In fact, this was the very method followed by the Holy Prophet (S); rather, when ‘Umar came, he followed the policy of creating classes in the Muslim community; he therefore used to give the warriors of Badr and the Ansar more than the others, creating caste and capiTalibsm among Muslims.

When the Imam’s troops were stricken by dissolution and effeteness, they turned their faces towards Mu’awiyah to join his army. Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas hurried to the Imam (‘a) to inform him of

this problem and give him some advice. He thus said, 'O Amir Al-Mu'minin! You may prefer in allowances the Arabs to the non-Arabs and the people of Quraysh to the other Arabs.'

Looking down on Abdullah, the Imam ('a) answered,

Do you command me that I should seek support by oppressing those over whom I have been placed? By Allah, I will not do so as long as the world goes on, and as long as one star leads another in the sky. Even if it were my property, I would have distributed it equally among them, then why not when the property is that of Allah. Beware! Certainly, that giving of wealth without any right for it is wastefulness and lavishness.

It raises its doer in this world, but lowers him in the next world. It honors him before people, but disgraces him with Allah. If a man gives his property to those who have no right for it or do not deserve it, Allah deprives him of their gratefulness, and their love too would be for others. Then if he falls on bad days and needs their help, they would prove the worst comrades and ignoble friends. 32

One day, a lady from the tribe of Quraysh came to Al-Kufah, the political capital of the Islamic State in the reign of Imam Ali ('a), to ask the Imam ('a) to increase her allowance. When she was to Al-Kufah, she could not find Imam Ali's house; therefore, she asked a woman to guide her to his house and asked her to accompany her thereto.

On their way to the Imam's house, the lady from Quraysh asked this woman about the amount she usually received from the allowances. When the woman answered, the lady from Quraysh found out that both of them were receiving the same amount. She then asked about her nationality and she came to know that she was non-Arab.

When the lady arrived in the mosque where Imam Ali ('a) lived, she did not let that non-Arab woman leave, and when she was before the Imam ('a), she shouted, 'Is it fair, O son of Abu Talib, that you make me equal to this non- Arab woman?'

With feelings of anxiety, Imam Ali (‘a) took a handful of dust, turned it over in his hand, and said,

Some of this dust has never been better than the rest of it.’

The Imam (‘a) then recited this holy Quranic verse:

O humankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware. (49:13)

Precaution In Matters Related To The Public Properties

Imam Ali (‘a) was at the highest point of precaution in matters appertained to the public properties. He did not spend a single penny from the public treasury on his family members and himself; rather, he made his family members stand harsh poverty. On the other hand, he used to spend all the money of the public treasury on the public interests in order to provide for the poor and the financially weak.

About the public money that ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan embezzled from the public treasury, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

*By Allah, even if I had found that by such money women have been married or slave-maids have been purchased I would have resumed it because there is wide scope in dispensation of justice, and he who finds it hard to act justly should find it harder to deal with injustice.*33

Instructing one of his officials to economize and not to lean to extravagance, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

Give up lavishness and be moderate. Every day remember the coming day. Hold back from the funds what you need and send forward the balance for the day of your need.

*Do you expect that Allah may give you the reward of the humble while you yourself remain vain in His view? And do you covet that He may give you the reward of those practicing charity while you enjoy comforts and deny them to the weak and the widows? Certainly, a man is awarded according as he acts and meets what he has sent forward; and that is an end to the matter.*34

The most important issue that preoccupied Imam Ali ('a) was to act precautiously towards the public property and to spend them on the financially weak, the widows, and the orphans in order to meet their needs and save them from misery and deprivation.

An example of Imam Ali's precautious course in the public property is that when he was informed that Ziyad ibn Abih, the Imam's deputy governor of Al- Basrah, had taken part of the Muslims' property for himself, he wrote this letter to him:

*I truthfully swear by Allah that if I come to know that you have misappropriated the funds of the Muslims, small or big; I shall inflict upon you such punishment, which will leave you empty, handed, heavy backed and humiliated; and that is an end to the matter.*35

This is the very justice that Almighty Allah has prescribed for His servants in order to meet their needs from sustenance and to cast the shadow of misery and deprivation away from them.

Another wonderful example of Imam Ali's policy of precaution in the public funds is that Abdullah ibn Ja'far, Imam Ali's nephew and son-in-law (i.e. the husband of Lady Zaynab), came from Al-Madinah to visit the Imam and seek financial assistance. He thus said to his uncle, 'O Leader of the Believers! I expect that you may grant me some subsidy or financial support, for, by Allah, I have no maintenance left except that I should sell my riding animal.'

Answering him, Imam Ali ('a) said,

Nay, by Allah! I cannot understand your request in any other way except that you want your uncle to steal and give you! 36

This is the very infinite justice that Imam Ali (‘a) applied to himself before applying it to the others.

Al-Shi’bi narrated the following incident:

When I was boy, I once traveled to Al-Kufah and entered the courtyard of the mosque there. I found Ali standing on two heaps of silver and gold and holding a belt-like stick in the hand. He used to drive people away with that stick and then return to the heaps to distribute them to the last piece. He then left home without carrying with him even one piece of these heaps.

I then returned to my father and said, ‘I have just seen the best of all people.’ ‘Who is he, son?’ asked my father.

I answered, ‘He is Ali ibn Abi Talib. I have seen him’ etc.’

My father wept and said, ‘Surely, you have seen the best of all people.’37

One account of piety and alienation from worldly pleasures with which Almighty Allah has endued him, Imam Ali (‘a) is really the best of all people. During his reign, Imam Ali (‘a) did not grant his two sons Al-Hasan and Al- Husayn anything from the public funds; rather, he treated them as same as he treated the other Muslims.

Khalid ibn Mu’ammar Al-Awsi says to ‘Alya' ibn Al-Haytham, one of Imam Ali’s companions, ‘Fear Allah, O ‘Alya', with regard to your clan and look deeply into the affairs of your relatives and yourself. What do you expect from a man whom I once asked to increase the allowance of his own sons Al- Hasan and Al-Husayn a few units so that they would improve their living, but he was angry and he refused to do?’38

Agricultural Production

Imam Ali (‘a) took very much interest in developing the agricultural projects and attached very much importance to such plans, because, in these ages, they were the spinal column of the national economy. In his famous epistle to Malik Al-Ashtar, Imam Ali (‘a) shed thorough light on this point and highlighted the importance of reforming the agricultural lands before collecting their taxes. He thus says,

You should also keep an eye on the cultivation of the land more than on the collection of revenue, because revenue cannot be had without cultivation; and whoever asks for revenue without cultivation ruins the area and brings death to the people. His rule will not last only a moment.

If they complain of the heaviness (of the revenue) or of diseases, or dearth of water, or excess of water or of a change in the condition of the land either due to flood or to drought, you should remit the revenue to the extent that you hope will improve their position. The remission granted by you for the removal of distress from them should not be grudged by you, because it is an investment, which they will return to you in the shape of the prosperity of your country and the progress of your domain in addition to earning their praise and happiness for meeting out justice to them.

You can depend upon their strength because of the investment made by you in them through catering to their convenience, and can have confidence in them because of the justice extended to them by being kind to them. After that, circumstances may so turn that you may have ask for their assistance, when they will bear it happily, for prosperity is capable of bearing whatever you load on it.

The ruin of the land is caused by the poverty of the cultivators, while the cultivators become poor when the officers concentrate on the collection (of money), having little hope for continuance (in their posts) and deriving no benefit from objects of warning.[39]

Freedom

One of the principles that Imam Ali (‘a) put into practice during his reign was that he granted people full freedom that is contingent upon the point that these freedoms should not be exploited for transgressing the others and injuring their interests and should not be in violation of the regulations of the religion.

Political Freedom

Political freedom is understood as granting all people full freedom to follow any political trend even if it is in violation of the trend followed by the ruling authorities. Imam Ali (‘a) granted this freedom even to those who refused paying homage to him openly, such as Sa’d ibn Abi-Waqqas and Abdullah ibn ‘Umar, and their likes who supported the government of ‘Uthman, because this man used to grant them fiefs and huge sums of money from the public treasury.

Hence, Imam Ali (‘a) did not force such persons to pay homage to him and did not take any strict procedure against them, as Abu-Bakr did with those who refused to swear allegiance to him, taking into consideration the difference that all people, except a very few ones, paid homage to Imam Ali (‘a) without coercion or compulsion, as Abu-Bakr and his gang did.

Imam Ali (‘a) viewed that all people should be free to follow any trend or take side with any political movement; rather, it is the ruling authority’s duty to procure full freedom for them as long as they do no declare rebellion against the government or create mischief in the land.

Likewise, Imam Ali (‘a) granted freedom to the Khawarij; he neither deprived them of their allowances nor ordered his police and security forces to arrest them, although they were the most dangerous enemies and rivals. However, when they spread mischief in the land and circulated panic and fear among the masses, Imam Ali (‘a) fought them so as to maintain the public interest.

Freedom Of Expression

A branch of political freedom, the freedom of expression is to grant people the right to express their own views, be they with or against the policy of the ruling regime.

Imam Ali (‘a) granted his people the freedom to express their own ideas and opinions, even if they would oppose his policies, unless these ideas led to creating mischief. Only then, they would be exposed to punishment.

Historicists report that on his way back after the Battle of Al-Nahrawan, Imam Ali (‘a) was received by very much abuse and insult. Nevertheless, he did not take any procedure against these people and did not punish or deprive them of their rights as citizens.40

One day, Abu-Khalifah Al-ta’i met a group of his cousins among whom was Abu’l-’Ayzar who was Kharijite (i.e. one of those who antagonized Imam Ali (‘a) and considered him to have abandoned the faith of Islam). This man asked ‘Adi ibn Hatam Al-ta’i, ‘Are you safe and successful (i.e. following the faith of the Khawarij) or you are still transgressor and sinful (i.e. following Imam Ali)?’ Of course, by these words, he attacked Imam Ali (‘a) by making an innuendo.

‘Adi answered, ‘Of course, I am safe and successful (i.e. by following Imam Ali).

However, Al-Aswad ibn Zayd and Al-Aswad ibn Qays had apprehensions of that man; so, they arrested him and brought him before Imam Ali (‘a), who said to them, ‘Now, what should I do to this man in your opinion?’

They answered, ‘You should permit us to kill him.’

The Imam (‘a) asked in surprise, *‘Should I kill him although he had not rebelled against me practically?’*

They said, 'Then, you should order us to detain him.'

The Imam ('a) answered, *'He has not committed any crime. Release the man.'*[41]

The like of this freedom has never been witnessed by people all over history. Imam Ali ('a) did not settle an account with people just because of what they say; rather, he let them say whatever they wanted. He did not impose upon them supervision to prevent them from expressing their ideas freely.

Freedom Of Criticism

Imam Ali ('a) granted people full freedom to criticize his rule. He did not punish anyone for having criticized his policy.

Ibn Al-Kawwa', one of the bitterest enemies of Imam Ali ('a), once objected to him and quoted this holy verse:

If you ascribe a partner to Allah, your work will fail. (39:65)

Imam Ali ('a) answered him with quoting another holy verse, which is this:

So, have patience! Allah's promise is the very truth. Let not those who have no certainty make you impatient. (30:60)

Thus, the Imam ('a) did not take any penal procedure against the man; rather, he left him alone.

Freedom Of Moving

Unlike 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab who had placed the Companions under house arrest and prohibited them from leaving the capital before obtaining a permission from him personally, Imam Ali ('a) granted all the citizens who were under his rule the freedom to move and change their places. For instance, he allowed Talhah

and Al-Zubayr to leave the capital although he had already known that they only intended to breach their homage to him.

Supervision Over Markets

Imam Ali (‘a) was the first caliph to place the market under supervision that he himself used to make. He (‘a) used to wander among the sellers, instructing them to show piety, warning them against disobeying Almighty Allah, and ordering them to be honest in their dealings. He used to say to them,

Act charitably. Lower the prices as much as you can, because this brings you more blessings (i.e. profits). 42

Holding a stick in his hand, Imam Ali (‘a) used to walk around in the marketplaces and say to the merchants,

*O group of merchants, take rightfully and give rightfully, and only then will you be safe.*43

Alone, Imam Ali (‘a) used to walk in marketplaces, ordering people to show piety and to sell their merchandise in a proper manner. Instructing the butchers, he used to say,

*Give full measure and full weight, and do not puff the meat.*44

One day, Ghalib ibn Sa’sa’ah, the father of the famous poet Al-Farazdaq, visited Imam Ali (‘a), who asked him, *‘What have you done with your numerous camels?’*

Ghalib answered, ‘The taxes have separated them (i.e. they have been spent as taxes and financial duties).

Praising him, Imam Ali (‘a) said, *‘This is verily the best way to use.’*45

In the time of Imam Ali’s government, there was an insane man who used to walk behind almost all funerals and call out, ‘Leav-

ing (is the fate)! Leaving!'

One day, a funeral passed by Imam Ali ('a) who could not find that man following it. So, the Imam ('a) asked about the reason, and he was informed that this funeral was carrying the dead body of that very insane man! The Imam ('a) thus said, *'There is no god save Allah (i.e. an expression of astonishment)!'* The Imam ('a) then cited this poetic verse as example: *'He kept on calling out the leave, until the cameleer made the camel of death keel down on his door.'*46

In one of his speeches to the people of Al-Kufah, Imam Ali ('a) said,

*If I leave you without supervision, you will return to sitting in groups, citing proverbs and reciting poetry.*47

One day, Imam Ali ('a) left to visit the market of camels. In the middle of the marketplace, he raised his voice with these words:

*O group of merchants, beware of false oaths, because they will bring about decrease in your stocks and removal of blessings.*48

Imam Ali ('a) would not purchase anything from sellers who would recognize him, for fear that they would not let him pay the price or they would make improper discount for him. One day, he went to the market of the cloth merchants and asked a seller if he had two dresses with five dirhams. The man said, 'Yes, O Amir Al-Mu'minin! I have such.'

Immediately, the Imam ('a) left him, because he had recognized him.49

- 1. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 130.
- 2. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:80.
- 3. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 92.
- 4. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 3.
- 5. Ibn Abd-Rabbih, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 3:93.

- 6. According to Al-Buladhari, in Ansab Al-Ashraf 3:933, allegiance to Imam Ali (‘a) was sworn on Saturday, the nineteenth of Dhu’l-Hijjah. According to Ibn Al-Dimashqi in Jawahir Al-MaTalibb 1:291, it was sworn on Friday, the thirteenth of Dhu’l-Hijjah, AH 35.
- 7. Historicists report that ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab ascended the minbar and said, ‘Verily, the swearing of allegiance to Abu-Bakr was a slip. May Allah protect from its bad consequences. Whoever repeats its like, then you must kill him. Whoever swears allegiance to a man before counseling the Muslims, both of them are surely perishing men. Therefore, you must kill them both.’
  However, ‘Umar’s words can be understood as follows: ‘The swearing of allegiance to Abu-Bakr was slip, but Allah saved the Muslims from its evil.’ [translator]
- 8. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 229.
- 9. Quoting this meaning, Ahmad ibn Hanbal is reported to have said, ‘Verily, caliphate did not beautify Ali; rather, Ali beautified caliphate.’ Manaqib Ahmad, pp. 163.
- 10. Tarikh Al-Ya’qubi, 2:155.
- 11. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab 3:55.
- 12. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi’l-Tarikh 3:74.
- 13. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 27.
- 14. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Letter No. 45.
- 15. Al-Baghdadi, Khuzanat Al-Adab 3:59.
- 16. Ibn Al-Jawzi, Al-Furusiyyah, pp. 73.
- 17. Al-Baghdadi, Khuzanat Al-Adab 7:130.
- 18. Al-Tha’alibi, Al-Tamthil wa’l-Muhasarah, pp. 284.
- 19. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-’Iqd Al-Farid 1:238.
- 20. Al-Tha’alibi, Lata'if Al-Ma’arif, pp. 59.
- 21. Al-Zubaydi, Taj Al-’Arus 5:204.
- 22. Al-Naraqi, Jami’ Al-Sa’adat 1:202.
- 23. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 199.
  People who are ignorant of religion and ethics, free from the shackles of religious law, and unaware of the conception of punishment and reward find no paucity of excuses and means for the achievement of their objects. They can find

ways of success at every stage; but when the dictates of humanity, or Islam, or the limitations imposed by ethics and religious law act as impediments, the chances of devising and finding means become narrow, and the possibility of action becomes restricted. Mu'awiyah's influence and control was the result of these devices and ways in following, which he knew neither impediment nor any obstacle of what is lawful or unlawful, nor did fear of the Judgment Day prevent him from acting fearlessly. 'Allamah Al-Raghib Al-Isfahani, taking account of his characters, writes:

'His aim always was to achieve his object whether lawful or unlawful. He did not care for religion nor did he ever think of divine chastisement. Thus, in order to maintain his power, he resorted to misstatements and concoctions, and practiced all sorts of deceits and contrivances. When he saw that success was not possible without entangling Imam Ali Amir Al-Mu'minin ('a) in war, he roused Talhah and Al-Zubayr against him. When success could not be achieved by this means, he instigated the Syrians and brought about the civil war of Siffin. When his rebellious position had become known by the killing of 'Ammar, he at once duped the people by saying that Imam Ali ('a) was responsible for killing him as he had brought him into the battlefield; and on another occasion, he interpreted the words 'Al- fi'ah Al-baghiyah (rebellious party)' occurring in the saying of the Holy Prophet (S) to mean 'avenging party' intending to prove that 'Ammar would be killed by the group that would seek revenge of 'Uthman's blood, although the next portion of this saying namely 'he will call them towards Paradise while they will call him to Hellfire,' does not leave any scope for interpretation.

When there was no hope of victory even by these cunning means, he contrived to raise copies of the Holy Quran on spears, although, in his view, neither the Holy Quran nor did its commandments carry any weight. If he had really aimed

at a decision by the Holy Quran, he should have put this demand before the commencement of the battle, and when it became known to him that the decision had been secured by 'Amr ibn Al-'As by deceiving Abu-Musa Al-Ash'ari, and that it did not have even a remote connection with the Holy Quran, he should not have accepted it and should have punished 'Amr for this cunning, or, at least, should have warned and rebuked him. However, on the contrary, 'Amr's performance was much appreciated and in reward he was made the governor of Egypt.

In contrast to this, Imam Ali's conduct was a high specimen of religious law and ethics. He kept in view the requirements of truth and righteousness even in adverse circumstances and did not allow his chaste life to be tarnished by the views of deceit and contrivance. If he wished, he could face cunning by cunning, and Mu'awiyah's shameful activities could have been answered by similar activities. For example, when he put a guard on the River Euphrates and stopped the supply of its water (to Imam Ali's men), then the supply of water could have been cut from them also on the grounds that since they had occupied River Euphrates, it was lawful to reTalibate, and in this way, they could be overpowered by weakening their fighting power.

However, Imam Ali ('a) could never tarnish his hands with such an inhuman act which was not permitted by any law or code of ethics, although common people regard such acts against the enemy as lawful and call this duplicity of character for achievement of success, a stroke of policy, and administrative ability. Imam Ali ('a) yet could never think of strengthening his power by fraud or duplicity of behavior on any occasion. Thus, when people advised him to retain the officers of the days of 'Uthman in their position and to befriend Talhah and Al-Zubayr by assigning them governorship of Al-Kufah and Al-Basrah, and make use of Mu'awiyah's ability in administration by giving him the government of Syria, Imam

Ali (‘a) rejected the advice and preferred the commandments of religious law over worldly expediency, and openly declared about Mu’awiyah as follows:
If I allow Mu’awiyah to retain what he already has, I will be one

‘who takes those who lead people astray, as helpers (Quran, 18:51).’

Those who look at apparent successes do not care to find out by what means the success has been achieved. They support anyone whom they see succeeding by means of cunning ways and deceitful means and begin to regard him an administrator, intelligent, a politician, intellectually brilliant, and so on, while he who does not deploy cunning and fraudulent methods owing to his adherence to Islamic commandments and divine instructions and prefers failure to success secured through wrong methods is regarded as ignorant of politics and weak in foresight. They do not feel it necessary to think what difficulties and impediments exist in the way of a person who adheres to principles and laws which prevent him from proceeding forward even after approaching near success. [Quoted from Nahj Al-Balaghah; a commentary on Imam Ali’s word about Mu’awiyah’s cunning.]

- 24. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 41.
- 25. Al-Baghdadi, Khuzanat Al-Adab 1:420.
- 26. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 1:410.
- 27. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 209.
- 28. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 215.
- 29. Arab linguists state that Imam Ali (‘a) wanted to say that his hands have never been stained with these public funds, since he always put them where they should be placed. [Ibn Mansur, Lisan Al-’Arab 14:155]
- 30. In the reign of Imam Ali (‘a), the military forces were divided into seven divisions, as follows:
The first division included the tribe of Kinanah and their allies, including the Abyssinians and the tribe of Judaylah.

The second division included the tribes of Qusa'ah, Ghassan, Bujaylah, Khash'am, Kindah, kasramawt, and Al-Azd.
The third division, whose members were known for their loyalty to Imam Ali ('a) and animosity to the Umayyads, included Midhhaj, kimyar, Hamdan, and their allies.
The fourth division included the tribes of Tamim and their allies.
The fifth division included the tribes of Asad, Ghatafan, Muharib, Æubay'ah, and Taghlib. The sixth division included the tribes of Iyad, 'Akk, Abd Al-Qays, the people of Hajr, and the Persians.
The seventh division included the tribe of tayy.

- 31. Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 1:81.
- 32. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 125.
- 33. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 15.
- 34. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 20.
- 35. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 21.
- 36. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 31:51.
- 37. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Al-Thaqafi, Al-Gharat 1:54.
- 38. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 10:250.
- 39. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 53.
- 40. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Al-Thaqafi, Al-Gharat 1:31.
- 41. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 3:73.
- 42. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:154.
- 43. Waki', Akhbar Al-Qusah 1:169.
  In Al-Zamakhshari's Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:144, the following words are added to the Imam's previous words:
  'Do not refuse the right even if it is little; lest, you will be deprived of its much quantity. Whenever an amount that is right is refused, many of its folds will be wasted in a wrong manner.'
- 44. Ibn Sa'd, Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 2:18.
- 45. Al-Baghdadi, Khuzanat Al-Adab 1:222.
- 46. Muhammad Shakir Al-Katabi, Fawat Al-Wafiyyat 2:269.
- 47. Haydar Al-Hilli, Al-'Iqd Al-Mufassal 9:220.
- 48. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Al-Thaqafi, Al-Gharat 1:105.
- 49. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Al-Thaqafi, Al-Gharat 1:99.

The Battle Of The Camel

Historicists and narrators of the Prophetic traditions have unanimously agreed that the Holy Prophet (S) foretold Imam Ali (‘a)-his successor and the door to his city of knowledge-that he would fight against the breakers of their pledges (*nakithun*), the wrongdoers (*qasitun*), and the apostates (*mariqun*).1

The ‘breakers of their pledges’ are those who broke out the Battle of the Camel against Imam Ali (‘a) and paved the way for Mu’awiyah and his faction to wage wars against the Imam. Mu’awiyah and his faction are the qasitun (*wrongdoers*) in the prophecy of the Holy Prophet (S), as they were wrongdoers.

The ‘apostates’ are the Khawarij who abandoned their faith of Islam and fought against Imam Ali (‘a). All Muslim scholars have unanimously decided these people as sinful, faithless, and absconders from the straight path of Islam.

On more than one occasion, the Holy Prophet (S) declared,

Whoever carries a weapon against us is not one of us (i.e. does not belong to us).2

After my departure, do not return to atheism by beheading each other.3

Nevertheless, these people went along with their fancies and responded to their personal greed.

Let us now put forward the first of these battles:

The War of the Camel was waged by persons who breached their homage to Imam Ali (‘a) and contravened the covenant they had made with Almighty Allah Who took their pledge of obedience to and compliance with Imam Ali (‘a). Referring to them, Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

Whoever breaches his homage, will meet Allah mutilated and handless.[4]

By breaking out this war, they aroused sedition among Muslims and gainsaid Almighty Allah's command of holding fast by the covenant of Allah and not being disunited. In fact, these people detached themselves from the community of Muslims, shed the blood of Muslims wrongfully, and spread grief and mourning among them. Almighty Allah will then settle account with them for the grave sins they had committed.

The most prominent personalities who led this war will be introduced hereinafter:

'A'ishah The Daughter Of Abu-Bakr

Before delving into the details of 'A'ishah's role in the Battle of the Camel and her mutiny against Imam Ali's government, let us point out a very important issue; namely, 'A'ishah's attitude to 'Uthman and his government.

'A'ishah was on the top of those who detested and criticized 'Uthman ibn 'Affan relentlessly. Historicists have narrated many situations of her harsh condemnations of 'Uthman's personality and policy.

(1) Muhammad ibn Ishaq has reported Hakim ibn Abdullah as narrating this incident:

One day, I visited Al-Madinah and went straightly to the Holy Prophet's Mosque where I saw someone holding in his raising hand something and shouting, 'This is the slipper of the Messenger of Allah and this is his shirt. However, Pharaoh (*i.e. tyrant*) of this community is still among you.'

The shouter was 'A'ishah, while 'Uthman was shouting back at her to keep silent. He then said to the audience, 'She is only a

woman and her brain is the brain of women. So, do not listen to her.'

(2) Al-Hasan ibn Sa'd has reported that 'A'ishah, once, from behind a curtain, raised a paper of a copy of the Holy Quran with two pieces of wood while 'Uthman was standing up. She then said to him, 'O 'Uthman, put into effect what is mentioned in this Book.'

Answering her, 'Uthman said, 'Keep on doing such deeds and I will right now lead the heat of fire towards you!'

'A'ishah replied, 'If you do this to the women of the Prophet, you will most surely be cursed by Allah and His Messenger. This is the shirt of Allah's Messenger; it has not been yet spoiled, while 'Uthman has spoiled the Messenger's practices. O Na'thal!'

(3) Al-Layth ibn Abi-Salman has reported on the authority of Thabit Al-Ansari on the authority of Ibn Abi-'Amir Al-Ansari who narrated the following incident:

I was near the Mosque when 'Uthman passed by. Immediately, 'A'ishah shouted at him, 'O cheater! O sinful! You have breached your trust and led your subjects to waste! Had it not been for the five prayers, men would certainly have advanced towards you to slaughter you as same as they slaughter a sheep!'

'Uthman however recited this holy verse before her:

Allah sets forth an example to those who disbelieve the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot: they were both under two of Our righteous servants, but they acted treacherously towards them so they availed them naught against Allah, and it was said: Enter both the fire with those who enter. (66:10)

'A'ishah's Attitude To The Pledge Of Allegiance To Imam Ali

On her way back from Makkah to Al-Madinah, ‘A'ishah had reached a region called Surah when she met ‘Ubayd ibn Ummi-Kilab. She hurried towards him to ask about the latest news. ‘Ubayd informed her about the assassination of ‘Uthman. However, this news did not attract her attention, because she was waiting for the news of the next caliph.

She thus said, ‘So, what did they do next?’ ‘Ubayd said, ‘The people of Al-Madinah took upon themselves the issue of appointing the new caliph, but they swerved to an unpleasant path. They all thus agreed on handing over this position to Ali ibn Abi Talib!’

Losing her nerves and solemnity, ‘A'ishah looked at the sky and said, ‘If this matter is consummated for the one whose name you have just mentioned, then let the sky fall on the earth! Woe to you! What have you just said?’

When ‘Ubayd confirmed his first news, ‘A'ishah howled, lost her patience, and absentmindedness attacked her. Astounded by this situation, ‘Ubayd said, ‘What is the matter with you? In fact, I do not know any other person in this city worthier and more entitled than Ali to hold this position. I also cannot see any one to match him in all of his affairs. Which one of his qualities do you then abhor?’

Embarrassed, ‘A'ishah went on searching any justifiable reason. Finding nothing, she stuck herself to the weakest point, saying, ‘By Allah, ‘Uthman has been killed wrongly. I will now demand with vengeance on the shedding of his blood!’

‘Ubayd answered sarcastically, ‘This is indeed weak reason!’

However, when ‘A'ishah arrived in Makkah, she was received by the people of Quraysh. She thus declared before them, ‘O people of Quraysh, ‘Uthman has been assassinated. Ali ibn Abi Talib assassinated him. By Allah (I swear confirmedly)! To spend a single night under the (persecuting) rule of ‘Uthman is better than spending the whole lifetime under the (fair) rule of Ali.’[5]

When the people of Makkah surrounded her, she delivered a political speech in which she held the rabble responsible for killing ‘Uthman after he had quitted his sins and returned to the truth! Therefore, there was no reason for killing him, as ‘A'ishah claimed.6

Of course, these words were not accurate. ‘Uthman was killed by the armed forces of the Egyptians and the people of Iraq not to mention such prominent personalities like ‘Ammar ibn Yasir, Malik Al-Ashtar, Talhah, and Al-Zubayr. Besides, ‘A'ishah herself used to encourage people to kill ‘Uthman, describing him as infidel.

As for ‘Uthman’s repentance, ‘A'ishah confessed that he retreated from it when the Umayyad surrounding people put him under pressure.

In brief, ‘A'ishah’s speech in Makkah was the first voice that opposed Imam Ali’s government.

Motives For Mutiny

Of course, ‘A'ishah’s mutiny against Imam Ali’s government was not spontaneous; rather, there were many reasons behind it.

‘A'ishah had aspired that caliphate would be given to her cousin Talhah so that it would be given back to the clan of Taym. However, she could not succeed, despite her big efforts, because Talhah did not have any popular foundation to rest upon. This reason may be the most positive.

Another reason is that ‘A'ishah had already hated Imam Ali (‘a) in person, because the Holy Prophet (S) used to praise him and consider him superior to all others. Of course, this act would never please ‘A'ishah, because women generally have an aversion to the relatives of their husbands, especially when these relatives are held dearer to the husband than his wife.

A third reason is that ‘A'ishah could not stand Lady Fatimah (‘a), Imam Ali’s wife. On frequent occasions, the Holy Prophet (S) used to show remarkable love for his daughter. He honored her with such points that no woman else had at all. Besides, there was mutual dislike between ‘A'ishah and Lady Fatimah (‘a) because of many incidents that took place between the two.

Lady Fatimah (‘a) used to complain to her father against ‘A'ishah. This of course created hatred and animosity between the two.

‘A'ishah’s hatred towards Lady Fatimah (‘a) attained its climax when Lady Fatimah (‘a) gave birth to sons and daughters while ‘A'ishah did not. The Holy Prophet (S) then treated the children of Lady Fatimah (‘a) with extraordinary love and affection. He used to say that they were his children.

As a sign of her revulsion towards Lady Fatimah’s children, ‘A'ishah spared no effort to prevent burying Imam Al-Hasan’s dead body near his grandfather the Holy Prophet (S). She thus declared, ‘Do not let those whom I do not like enter my house!’

The last reason for ‘A'ishah’s mutiny against Imam Ali (‘a) was that the Holy Prophet (S) used to mention Imam Ali’s mother-in-law; namely, the great Lady Khadijah, with the best words of praise and appreciation to the degree that ‘A'ishah, once, said to him, ‘What do you remember from that red- mouthed aged woman after Allah has give you women better than her?’

Angrily, the Holy Prophet (S) answered,

Nay, by Allah! He has never given me any woman better than Khadijah. She believed me when all other people gave the lie to me. She gave me her entire wealth when all other people deprived me of their money. Only from her, I was given a child (i.e. Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra') while none of my other wives has given birth to a child for me.’

Back to the sequence of events, ‘A'ishah then hurried towards Ummu- Salamah, the virtuous widow of the Holy Prophet, asking her for taking part in ‘A'ishah’s efforts to depose Imam Ali (‘a). In fact, this step of ‘A'ishah is very strange. She must have learnt about Ummu-Salamah’s devotion and loyalty to Imam Ali (‘a). This means that ‘A'ishah lacked any profundity in the doctrinal and political attitudes of people.

When ‘A'ishah met Ummu-Salamah, she tried to cheat her with soft words. She thus said, ‘O daughter of Abu-Umayyah, you were the first to migrate with Allah’s Messenger from among his wives. You are the eldest mother of the believers.7 Allah’s Messenger used to run our affairs at your chamber.

Gabriel used to be at your chamber to reveal the Divine Revelations more than any other wife’s chamber.’

Suspiciously, Ummu-Salamah glanced at ‘A'ishah and said, ‘There must be something important behind these words of you.’

‘A'ishah said, ‘The people had ordered ‘Uthman to repent, and he did. Then, they killed him while he was observing fasting in the sacred month. I thus made my mind to go to Al-Basrah accompanied by Talhah and Al-Zubayr. So, I ask you to come out with us perchance Allah will fix this issue at our hands.’

Ummu-Salamah, condemning ‘A'ishah’s words and giving her an advice to deter her from committing this mater, said, ‘O daughter of Abu-Bakr, are you really demanding with vengeance on ‘Uthman’s blood? In fact, you have been the most vehement enemy of ‘Uthman among all these people.

You used to name him Na’thal. So, what do you have to do with ‘Uthman’s blood? At least, ‘Uthman is from the clan of Abd-Manaf while you are from the clan of Taym ibn Murrah. Woe to you, ‘A'ishah! Do you want to mutiny against Ali who is the cousin of Allah’s Messenger and homage to whom was made by all the Muhajirun and Ansar?’

Moreover, Ummu-Salamah went on reminding ‘A'ishah of the supreme position that Imam Ali (‘a) enjoyed in the view of and with regard to the Holy Prophet (S).

Present in this meeting was Abdullah the son of Al-Zubayr who was one of the bitterest enemies of Imam Ali (‘a). When he feared lest his maternal aunt ‘A'ishah would respond to Ummu-Salamah and spoil the entire conspiracy, he shouted at Ummu-Salamah, ‘O daughter of Abu-Umayyah, we have already learnt about your enmity with the family of Al-Zubayr.’

Reproaching him, Ummu-Salamah said, ‘By Allah, you will pull her feet into this problem, but neither your father nor will you be able to pull her out of it. Do you aspire that the Muhajirun and the Ansar will accept your father Al- Zubayr and his acquaintance Talhah as their leaders while Ali ibn Abi Talib is still full of life, while the Holy Prophet (S) had described him as the chief of every male and female believing Muslims?’

Abdullah answered, ‘We have never heard such a thing from Allah’s Messenger!’

Proving the untruth of Abdullah and speaking with the logic of truth, Ummu- Salamah said, ‘If you personally have not heard this from Allah’s Messenger, your aunt ‘A'ishah must have heard it. Go on and ask her. As for me, I did hear Allah’s Messenger saying, ‘Ali is my successor among you in my lifetime and after my death. Whoever disobeys him has in fact disobeyed me.’ Do you, ‘A'ishah, testify to this or not?’

‘A'ishah could not deny this truth; she therefore said, ‘Yes, by Allah, I do.’

Ummu-Salamah then went on giving more advices to ‘A'ishah, saying, ‘O ‘A'ishah, fear Allah for yourself! Beware lest you will be the one barked by the dogs of Al-Haw'ab, as Allah had informed and His Messenger had predicted. Do not be deceived by

Al-Zubayr and Talhah, because they will not then avail you against Allah.'

Unfortunately, 'A'ishah did not pay any attention to Ummu-Salamah's advice; rather, she responded to her emotions that were full of hatred and animosity towards Imam Ali ('a).

Immediately after this meeting, Ummu-Salamah wrote a letter to Imam Ali ('a), informing him of the details of the meeting and of the rebellion of these people.8

It was expected that Ummu-Salamah would refuse totally the proposal of 'A'ishah and, instead, go on praising Imam Ali ('a) and mentioning his unmatched excellences.

The Makkah Conference

'A'ishah held a conference with Talhah, Al-Zubayr, and other persons who hated Imam Ali ('a) and decided to breach their allegiance to him. In fact, Makkah was a good place for these conferees, because it was full of the individuals of the clans of Quraysh who were known for their revulsion towards Imam Ali ('a) and their long-termed mental and practical antagonism to the Holy Prophet (S). As a result, the conferees could find positive reaction to and good empathy for them.

Resolutions Of The Conference

The chiefs of mutiny exchanged opinions about the region they should invade and take as headquarter as well as the slogan they should raise to justify their rebel. They thus decided to march to Al-Basrah, occupy it, and take it as the center of their mutiny against Imam Ali ('a), because they could find many fans and supporters therein.

They also refused the idea of marching to Al- Madinah, because the caliph lived in and ran the political affairs from there. Besides, he had such a reinforced military power that they could not confront. They also refused the idea of marching to Syria, because it was already under their control, since Mu'awiyah was the dominating power there. Thus, they feared lest Mu'awiyah's government that was the opposing power to Imam Ali ('a) would be badly affected.

Deciding on a slogan to be raised in their mutiny, they agreed to raise the slogan of demanding with the blood of 'Uthman, claiming that he was killed wrongly in the sacred city. As practical slogan, they decided to raise 'Uthman's shirt, which was stained with his blood.

The conferees thus decided to hold Imam Ali ('a) responsible for the assassination of 'Uthman, claiming that he sheltered the assassinators and refused to submit them to trial.

Mu'awiyah Deceives Al-Zubayr And Talhah

Mu'awiyah deceived Talhah and Al-Zubayr and used them as bridge over which he crossed towards achieving his evil schemes when he promised them to be given the position of leadership if they would breach their homage to the Imam ('a). He thus wrote the following letter to them:

'To the servant of Allah, Al-Zubayr, and the leader of the believers:

From Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan:

Peace be upon you. I have obtained the homage of the people of Syria for you and they responded. They are now firmly ready to support you. So, your mission is now to obtain the homage of the

people of Al-Kufah and Al-Basrah before the son of Abu Talib would precede you thereto.

In fact, these two regions are the most important, and no region else can be important after these two. I thus declared Talhah to be your successor to this position. So, both of you must declare your demand with the blood of 'Uthman and call people to do so as well. Be as serious as possible and do not show any reluctance. May Allah grant you victory and disappoint your rival.'

When he received this letter, Al-Zubayr rejoiced and took wing. He hurried to Talhah to convey the content of the letter to him. When they both read Mu'awiyah's letter, they did not have the least doubt about the truthfulness of Mu'awiyah, the ferocious. They thus prepared themselves to declare mutiny against Imam Ali's government, hoping that they would be the caliphs after overthrowing the Imam's government. Carrying out Mu'awiyah's instruction, they raised the demand with the blood of 'Uthman as slogan.9

'Uthman's Fans Mobilize The Mutinous Army

Those whom 'Uthman had appointed as governmental officials and deputy governors, but Imam Ali ('a) dismissed them as soon as he became the caliph, started mobilizing 'A'ishah's army financially from the money they had usurped from the public treasury during the reign of 'Uthman. Ya'la ibn Umayyah, who was 'Uthman's deputy governor of Yemen, supplied the army with six hundred camels and six hundred thousand dirhams.

Abdullah ibn 'Amir, 'Uthman's deputy governor of Al-Basrah, provided a big sum of money he had embezzled from the public treasury.10 However, the members of the high command did not find any problem in receiving these illegal sums of money.

Imam Ali's Epistle To Talhah And Al-Zubayr

To accomplish argument against Talhah and Al-Zubayr, Imam Ali ('a) sent them the following epistle:

Now, both of you know, although you conceal it, that I did not approach the people until they approached me, and I did not ask them to swear allegiance to me until they themselves swore allegiance to me, and both of you were among those who approached me and swore me allegiance. Certainly, the common people did not swear me allegiance under any force put on them or for any money given to them.

If you two swore allegiance to me obediently, come back and offer repentance to Allah soon, but if you swore allegiance to me reluctantly, you have certainly given me cause for action, by showing your obedience and concealing your disobedience. By my life, you were not more entitled than the other Muhajirun to conceal and hide the matter. Your refusing allegiance before entering into it would have been easier than getting out of it after having accepted it.

You have indicated that I killed 'Uthman; then let someone from among the people of Al-Madinah who supported neither me nor you decide the matter between me and you. Then, one of us shall face the command of law according to their involvement. You should give up your way now, when the great question before you is only one of shame, before you face the question of shame coupled with Hellfire; and that is an end to the matter.[11]

Marching To Al-Basrah

The troops of 'A'ishah moved from Makkah towards Al-Basrah to occupy it. Drums of war were beaten, standards were stretched, and the deviating powers crowded to join 'A'ishah's army, raising the slogan of demanding with 'Uthman's blood, while in reality

those who stood behind shedding ‘Uthman’s blood were ‘A'ishah, Talhah, and Al-Zubayr.

Thus, these troops decided to wage war against the legal authority and to sow disunity among Muslims, while the commanders of these troops did not have any doubt that they were wrong.

Hurriedly, the army of ‘A'ishah marched towards Al-Basrah. On their way, they meet a Bedouin named Al-’Arani who had a camel, which he gave the name of ‘Askar. One of ‘A'ishah’s soldiers offered to buy that camel, but the owner asked for a high price. However, when he knew that they wanted the camel for ‘A'ishah, he accepted to give it to them for nothing.

So, the camel was given to ‘A'ishah who rode on it to wage war against Imam Ali (‘a). Just like the calf that the Israelites worshipped, this camel was the axis around which all the supporters of ‘A'ishah gathered.12

Surrounded by her soldiers, ‘A'ishah passed by a place where dogs faced her with heavy barking. Frightened by the scene, ‘A'ishah asked Muhammad ibn Talhah about the name of that place. ‘This is the Al-Haw'ab Spring!’

Upon hearing this name, ‘A'ishah declared that she would retreat. When she was asked about the reason, she said that she had heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying to his wives, ‘I see coming that in the face of one of you, the dogs of Al-Haw'ab will bark. O red-faced (‘A'ishah), beware lest you will be that one!’13
Muhammad ibn Talhah said, ‘May Allah show you mercy! Move forward and leave such things behind your back.’

However, ‘A'ishah did not make a further step; rather, she decided to go back, because she became sure that she was wrong in this act.

The members of the high command were astounded at this situation, and all their attempts to make her change her mind failed.

She, full of sorrow and grief, went on repeating such words like, ‘Lead me back home! By Allah, I am the one at whom the dogs of Al-Haw'ab barked! Take me back home!’

However, when her nephew Abdullah ibn Al-Zubayr interfered, she collapsed before him. He could gather many bribable faithless persons to bear witness under an oath before ‘A'ishah that this place was not Al-Haw'ab! That was the first false oath in Islam.14 Thus, ‘A'ishah was persuaded to quit the idea of returning home and to lead these armies to fight Imam Ali (‘a).

When the armies arrived in Al-Basrah, the people of this city panicked very much. The deputy governor of the city, ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf, delegated Abu’l-Aswad Al-Du'ali to hold talks with ‘A'ishah and ask her why she came to Al-Basrah.

Carrying out this mission, Abu’l-Aswad asked ‘A'ishah who answered, ‘I am here to demand with the blood of ‘Uthman.’

Abu’l-Aswad said, ‘None of the killers of ‘Uthman is in Al-Basrah.’

She answered, ‘This is true, but they are in Al-Madinah with Ali ibn Abi-Talib. I thus came here to encourage the people of Al-Basrah to help me fight against him. Would we not revolt against your swords that killed ‘Uthman after we revolted for you against ‘Uthman’s whips when they played on your backs’?

Refuting such weak fallacy, Abu’l-Aswad answered, ‘What do you have to do with swords and whips? You are only the detainee of Allah’s Messenger. He ordered you to keep yourself at home and recite the Book of your Lord. Women are not required to fight and it is not proper for them to demand with bloodshed?

Moreover, Ali is worthier than you are of following up this case and he is even closer to ‘Uthman in family relationship than you are, because both of them are the descendants of Abd-Manaf.’

However, ‘A'ishah paid no heed to these overwhelming arguments; rather, she insisted on her situation, saying, ‘I will never leave this city before I go on what I have started. O Abu’l-Aswad, do you think that one will have the courage to fight against me?’

‘A'ishah thought that she enjoyed immunity with regard to her being the widow of the Holy Prophet (S). However, Abu’l-Aswad answered, ‘By Allah, you will be fought as intensely as possible.’

Thus, no success was made by Abu’l-Aswad in his talks with ‘A'ishah. He therefore went to Al-Zubayr and talked to him with a soft language, reminding him of his situation with Imam Ali (‘a) during the events of the Saqifah conspiratorial conference. He thus said, ‘O Abu-’Abdullah, people always remember your situation on that day when Abu-Bakr was paid homage. On that day, you unsheathed your sword, shouting, ‘No one should be preceded to the son of Abu Talib in this issue.’ How different your current situation from that one is!’

Hypocritically and fallaciously, Al-Zubayr answered, ‘We only demand with the blood of ‘Uthman.’

Abu’l-Aswad said, ‘It was your acquaintance (Talhah) and you who have participated in giving this position of leadership to Ali.’

These words softened Al-Zubayr’s heart and he was about to submit to the truth, but he asked Abu’l-Aswad to grant him respite so that he would discuss the matter with Talhah.

Abu’l-Aswad then hurried to Talhah and asked him to submit to the truth and maintain the unity of Muslims, but Talhah refused and insisted on transgression.[15]

After this, Abu’l-Aswad returned and informed the deputy governor of Al- Basrah about what had happened.

‘Uthman ibn Hunayf, the deputy governor of Al-Basrah, gathered his companions and delivered a sermon in which he said, ‘O peo-

ple, when you paid homage to Ali, you have only paid homage to Almighty Allah:

'Surely, those who swear allegiance to you do but swear allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is above their hands. Therefore, whoever breaks (his faith), he breaks it only to the injury of his own soul. And whoever fulfills what he has covenanted with Allah, He will grant him a mighty reward. (48:10)'

By Allah, if Ali had known that any one was worthier than him to this position, he would never have accepted it; and if people had paid homage to someone other than Ali, he would most certainly have complied with the people's choice, although Ali would never need any of the Companions; rather, they all could never dispense with him. Ali had a share in all of their good traits, but none of them had any share in his exclusive good traits.

These two men (i.e. Talhah and Al-Zubayr) paid homage to him, but they did not intend it purely for Allah's sake. So, they hurried to weaning before the completion of the suckling, hurried to suckling before birth, and hurried to birth before even pregnancy. Thus, they sought for Allah's reward from people!

They then claimed that they had paid homage (to Imam Ali) by force. If this is true, then they were just like the other people of Quraysh who had the option to pay homage or to refuse. Verily, the true guidance is what all people are following now; namely, the pledge of allegiance to Ali. Now, what do you say, people?'

Hakim ibn Jabalah, one of the prominent personalities of Al-Basrah, responded to 'Uthman ibn Hunayf and expressed his readiness to support him even if this would lead him to declare war against all people.16

Soon after that, violent military clashes took place between the group of 'A'ishah and the supporters of Imam Ali ('a) and some people fell dead. However, none of the two groups achieved vic-

tory. They therefore agreed on a temporary truce, waiting for the coming of Imam Ali (‘a) to solve the problem.

Among the articles of this truce, ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf was decided to keep on his work as the governor of Al-Basrah and to have the public treasury and the armed forces under his control, while Al-Zubayr, Talhah, and ‘A'ishah were given the right to settle anywhere they wanted in the city.

Thus, ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf went on carrying out his missions, such as leading the congregational prayers, distributing the allowances among the people of Al-Basrah, and spreading security and settlement. However, the group of ‘A'ishah breached their pledge and broke their covenants. They agreed upon attacking ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf and usurping the public treasury.

At a dark and stormy night, they implemented their plot. They thus attacked ‘Uthman while he was leading a congregational prayer, captured him, attacked the public treasury house, killed forty of the guards, and usurped the entire fund there. Marwan, having arrested ‘Uthman and killed his companions, plucked the hair of his head, beard, and brows, and left him hairless.17

The Minor Battle Of The Camel

When the group of ‘A'ishah spread disorder, corruption, and insecurity among people of Al-Basrah, the masses revolted against them and went out to the streets with unsheathed swords under the commandership of Hakim ibn Jabalah who had accompanied three hundred persons all of whom were from the tribe of Abd Al-Qays.

Thus, the troops of ‘A'ishah went out to face them; they carried ‘A'ishah on a camel and the two groups faced each other and engaged in a horrible battle, which was called the minor battle of the camel.

Hakim ibn Jabalah fought so bravely, but one of the companions of Talhah hit him with his sword on the leg and could sever it. So, Hakim sat on the ground, took the severed leg, threw it at the man, and could kill him.

Hakim did not stop fighting; rather, he kept on bleeding in the battlefield until he was martyred in defense of Imam Ali (‘a), the true successor of the Holy Prophet (S).

This battle ended with a victory for the army of ‘A'ishah who, as a result, took over Al-Basrah. They also intended to slay ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf, but they did not after he had threatened them with harsh punishment and revenge by his brother who was the deputy governor of Al-Madinah.

They thus feared lest ‘Uthman’s brother would kill their brothers and family members in Al- Madinah; therefore, they released ‘Uthman who, immediately, hurried to the capital. On his way, he met with Imam Ali (‘a) and joined him back to Al- Basrah. Joking with the Imam (‘a), ‘Uthman said, ‘You had sent me to Al- Basrah as old man, but I have now come to you as beardless youth!’

These events created disunity among the people of Al-Basrah, causing them to separate into two parties; one supporting ‘A'ishah and the other supporting Imam Ali (‘a). However, a third party withdrew this seditious conflict and refused to join any of the two parties.

Dispute On Leading The Prayer

The followers of Talhah disputed with the followers of Al-Zubayr as to who should lead the congregational prayer, because each one of them wanted to be the future leader! This dispute lasted for such a long time that the time of the prayer was about to slip away. Anticipating further developments, ‘A'ishah suggested that Muhammad the son of Talhah should lead the prayer a day and Abdullah the son of Al-Zubayr should lead it the other day.[18]

When Abdullah moved forward, Muhammad pulled him back and moved forward. Immediately, Abdullah prevented Muhammad to move forward. Upon seeing this situation, people decided to cast lots. When they did, Muhammad won and moved forward to lead the prayer.

In this prayer, he recited a holy Quranic chapter (i.e. Surah) that contained a divine threat with imminent punishment! In fact, Muslims should have expected such imminent punishment at the hands of these people whose political greed had led them to play rudely with the affairs of the religion.

Of course, this dispute presented these two persons and their followers sarcastically to people who began to belittle and deride them.

While they were on their first step, these people disputed on authority. What would they have done if they had gained victory? Of course, they would have fought against each other, no matter how many casualties they would cause to the Muslim community.

Imam Ali Seeks The Help Of The People Of Al-Kufah

Imam Ali (‘a) understood that no other means than armed force would be able to stop this mutiny that was led by ‘A'ishah; he therefore sought the help of the people of Al-Kufah, which was the most powerful military garrison in that time. To do this practically, the Imam (‘a) delegated a number of his prominent companions, headed by Hashim ibn ‘Utbah, to Al-Kufah and sent with him a message to Abu-Musa Al-Ash’ari, the governor of the city. In this letter, Imam Ali (‘a) wrote these words:

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent and All-merciful. I have sent to you Hashim ibn ‘Utbah so that you will send with him the Muslims to face some people who had breached their homage to me, killed my follow-

ers, and innovated in Islam a grave rebellion. So, send people to me with him when he comes to you, because I have entrusted the governorship of this district with you so that you will help me establish the truth and support me on this matter.[19]

When the delegation arrived in Al-Kufah and Hashim handed the Imam's letter over to Abu-Musa, the latter erased the letter and threatened Hashim with imprisonment and punishment. Moreover, he started discouraging people and instigating them not to join Imam Ali ('a). Al-Mirqal sent a letter to Imam Ali ('a) informing him against Abu-Musa.

In response, Imam Ali ('a) sent his son Imam Al-Hasan ('a) along with 'Ammar ibn Yasir and Qays ibn Sa'd to Al- Kufah carrying his decision of deposing Abu-Musa the betrayer and threatening him with punishment if he would refuse to comply with the delegation and would show mutiny and defiance.

In Al-Kufah, people received Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and his companions warmly. Immediately, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) called on Abu-Musa to obey the Imam ('a), but he refused, insisting on his error. So, he deposed Abu-Musa and appointed Qarasah ibn Ka'b as the new deputy governor of the city.

'Ammar ibn Yasir then delivered a remarkable speech, calling on the people of Al-Kufah to support and defend Imam Ali ('a). He thus said, 'The Leader of the Believers Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a)-may Allah save him, grant him vast victory, and confirm his affair perfectly-has sent his son and me to you, ordering you to go forth to him. So, go forth, fear Allah, and obey Him.

By Allah, if I knew that there is on this globe one more knowledgeable with the Book of Allah and with the practice of His Prophet than Ali, I would not ask you to go forth to him and I would not pledge to die for him. O people of Al- Kufah, observe Allah with regard to jihad (holy war).

By Allah, if things will be in the hands of anyone other than Ali, you will definitely suffer very much. Allah knows that I only intend to advise you sincerely and order you to what I know very well. I do not desire that in opposition to you I should betake myself to that which I forbid you. I desire nothing but reform so far as I am able, and with none but Allah is the direction of my affair to a right issue. On Him do I rely and to Him do I turn.'

Once again, 'Ammar made another speech in which he called people to support Imam Ali ('a) and defend the values of Islam for the achievement of which Imam Ali ('a) was exerting all possible efforts.

However, Abu-Musa Al-Ash'ari kept on discouraging people and calling them to rebellion and disobedience. So, Malik Al-Ashtar believed that the Imam's order would not be carried out as long as Al-Ash'ari was in Al-Kufah. He therefore decided to dismiss him with humility.

He gathered a group of his people and attacked the palace where Al-Ash'ari lived. At that night, Al- Ash'ari had to retire from his office. He spent that night fearful and with the first sparks of morning ran away towards Makkah to stay there with those who withdrew from this conflict.

Hujr ibn 'Adi, the prominent companion of Imam Ali ('a), delivered a speech, calling people to support Imam Ali ('a) and respond to the call of Imam Al- Hasan ('a). He thus said, 'O people, this is Al-Hasan the son of Amir Al- Mu'minin. You know that one of his two fathers is the Holy Prophet and the other is the well-pleased leader of the community. May Allah bless both of them!

You also know that there is none to match these two in Islam. Al-Hasan is the chief of the youths of Paradise, the chief of the Arab chiefs, the most perfect in righteousness, and the most perfect in knowledge and action. He is now the courier of his father to you.

He is calling you to the truth and asking you to give your support to him.

The true happy is he who joins and supports them, while the extremely unhappy is he who lags behind and refuses to participate with them. So, go forth light and heavy and think of the reward that you will win, for Allah never wastes the reward of the good-doers.'

All people responded to the Imam's call for jihad and support for the truth. Four thousand people decided to join the Imam ('a). On ships and on riding animals, they headed for Al-Basrah under the leadership of Imam Al-Hasan ('a). In Dhi-Qar, where Imam Ali ('a) had camped, they joined his camp. Upon seeing them, the Imam ('a) became very glad for the success made by his son Al-kasan ('a) and the accompanying delegation. He thus thanked these people for their efforts.

In Dhi-Qar, Imam Ali ('a) delivered a very important speech in which he referred to the horrible events he had to encounter after the passing away of his brother and cousin; namely, the Holy Prophet (S). He thus said,

All praise be to Allah under all conditions and all circumstances in the mornings and the evenings. I bear witness that there is no god save Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. He has sent him as mercy for the servants and new life for the lands when the earth was suffocated with seditions, its rope was wavering disorderly, Satan was worshipped in all of its sides, and Iblis, the enemy of Allah, had power over the beliefs of its inhabitants.

So, Muhammad the son of Abdullah the son of Abd Al-Muttalib was the one through whom Allah extinguished the fires on the earth, smothered its sparks, ripped up its pegs, and put right its inclination. He is truly the leader to true guidance and the divinely chosen prophet.

Indeed, he proclaimed that which he was commanded to proclaim and conveyed the messages of his Lord. Through him has Allah re-established

normal relations between the disputing parties, made safe the roads, spared the blood, and attuned between the people of mutual rancor that was deeply rooted in their breasts, until the inevitable came upon him. Hence, Allah grasped him to Him praiseworthy.

Then, people nominated Abu-Bakr as caliph, and he did not spare efforts. Then, Abu-Bakr nominated 'Umar as his successor, and he too did not spare efforts.

Then, people chose 'Uthman as caliph, and he did what he did to you and you did what you did to him. When what you all know took place regarding him, you came to pledge allegiance to me. I then said to you, 'I have no need for that position.' I entered my house, but you took me out of it. I held my hand back, but you stretched it. You then swarmed around me so heavily that I thought that you would kill me or you would kill each other.

Consequently, you paid homage to me while I was neither pleased nor cheerful with that. Allah the All-glorified has known that I always disliked governing the community of Muhammad (S) whom I heard him saying, 'Every governor that comes to manage any affair of my community will come, on the Resurrection Day, having his hands hung to his neck in the presence of all of the creatures. His record of deeds will be then opened. If he has acted fairly, then he will be saved; but if he has acted unjustly, then he will fall.'

Then, all of your groups agreed unanimously on me; and even Talhah and Al-Zubayr paid homage to me while I could recognize betrayal in their faces and breach in their eyes. They then asked me to permit them to go on 'Umrah (i.e. minor ritual pilgrimage) and I told that they did not intend for going on 'Umrah. So, they went to Makkah, egged on 'A'ishah, and could deceive her. Accompanied by the sons of the Released Ones,[20]*they all came to Al-Basrah and killed the Muslims there and committed many wrong things.*

How strange this is! They acted so obediently towards Abu- Bakr and 'Umar while they are defying me. They know for sure that I am at least not less than these two. If I wished, I would say more things.

From Syria, Mu'awiyah had sent them (i.e. Talhah and Al-Zubayr) a letter to deceive them. They tried not to let me know about the matter of this letter and they mutinied, trying to make the common people believe that they were demanding with the blood of 'Uthman. By Allah, they have neither criticized me for any improper deed that I might have done nor have they treated me with the least amount of fairness.

In fact, the bloodshed of 'Uthman is tied to them and should be demanded from them. How disappointed the caller is with regard to what he has called for and what answer he has been given! By Allah, they both are following deaf deviation and blind ignorance. Satan has amassed his party to support them and has urged his horses and feet to follow them, intending to take injustice back home and return wrong to its center.'

The Imam ('a) raised his hands toward the sky and said,

O Allah, Talhah and Al-Zubayr have ruptured their relation with me, wronged me, incited people against me, and breached their pledge of allegiance to me. So, please, unfasten what they have tied, break what they have strapped, do not forgive them forever, and make them face the bad result of what they have done and hoped.'[21]

Malik Al-Ashtar, trying to alleviate the situation, said to Imam Ali ('a), 'Reduce your anger, O Leader of the Believers. By Allah, the sedition of Talhah and Al-Zubayr is not impossible for us to deal with. They have entered under this matter (i.e. obedience to you) optionally and they then departed from us although we have not done any wrong nor have we innovated any matter in Islam.

Now, they are facing us with the fire of sedition, deviated and unjust, because they lack any clear argument against us and they have attired themselves with disgrace for no obvious reason. They thus headed for these territories. If they claim that 'Uthman was killed wrongly, then the family of 'Uthman must benefit from their claim.

I bear witness and I call Almighty Allah to bear witness to me that these two are the killers of 'Uthman. O Leader of the Believers, if

they insist on refusing to join what they have already abandoned and if they do not return to the obedience to you and to the allegiance they have already pledged to you, we will most surely attach them to the son of 'Affan.'

The Companions With Imam Ali

In his march towards confronting 'A'ishah, Imam Ali ('a) was accompanied by a good number of prominent and virtuous Companions, who had already been sure that the truth is always with Imam Ali ('a) and falsehood is always with his rivals. Of course, these Companions followed the Imam ('a) on basis of true guidance and insight. They must have always recollected the Holy Prophet's words about the Imam ('a), such as the following:

Ali is always with the truth and the truth is always with Ali.22

Ali's position to me is as exactly as the position of (Prophet) Aaron to (Prophet) Moses.

Muhammad ibn Habib Al-Qurashi Al-Baghdadi (died in AH 225) has listed the names of the Companions who took sides with Imam Ali ('a) during the Battle of the Camel. These Companions were 'Ammar ibn Yasir, 23 Sahl ibn Hunayf, 24 'Uthman ibn Hunayf, 25 Sa'd ibn Al-Harith ibn 'Amr, 26 Jariyah ibn Qudamah ibn Zuhayr, 27 Abu-Mas'ud Al-Ansari, 28 Abu-Sa'id Al-Khidri, Abu-Umamah Al-'Abdi ibn Al-'Ajlan Al-Bahili, 29 Khuzaymah ibn Thabit ibn Al- Fakih, 30 Hashim ibn 'Utbah ibn Abi-Waqqas, 31Sulayman ibn Surad Al- Khuza'i, 32 Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays Al-Kindi, 33 Qays ibn Sa'd ibn 'Abadah, 34 Abu-'Amrah, 35 Hujr ibn 'Adi Al-Kindi, 36 'Amr ibn Al-Hamq Al-Khuza'i, 37 Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, 38
'Ubaydullah ibn 'Abbas, 39Abdullah ibn Ja'far, 40 'Umar ibn Abi-Salamah, 41 Ju'dah ibn Hubayrah ibn Abi-Wahab, 42 Imam Al-Hasan ('a), and Imam Al-Husayn ('a).43

The forces of Imam Ali (‘a) moved from Dhi-Qar towards Al-Basrah and camped in an area named Al-Zawiyah near the city. At this area, Imam Ali (‘a) led a congregational prayer after the accomplishment of which he wept so heavily that his tears flowed on his cheeks. He was beseeching Almighty Allah earnestly to spare Muslims from bloodshed, guard them against the misfortunes of war, and unite their word on truth and true guidance.

Before the eruption of the battle, Imam Ali (‘a) sent to the opposing party some of his companions as peace couriers to warn them against the punishment that Almighty Allah would inflict upon them if they separated the unity of Muslims and shed their blood.

The Imam (‘a) first sent Sa’sa’ah ibn Sawhan to meet ‘A'ishah, Talhah, and Al- Zubayr and to deliver to them his message in which he declared the forbiddance of what they had done when they killed a number of Muslims in Al-Basrah and punished ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf, the companion of the Holy Prophet (S).

Sa’sa’ah first met with Talhah and conveyed to him the Imam’s message. He also invited him to peace, but Talhah did not respond to him; rather, he insisted on error, aggression, and fighting against the Imam (‘a).

When he met Al-Zubayr, Sa’sa’ah found him less intransigent than Talhah and swifter in accepting the Imam’s message.

Sa’sa’ah then headed for ‘A'ishah and conveyed to her the Imam’s message of peace, but she was resolute in fighting against the Imam (‘a). She thus said, ‘I have mutinied to demand with the blood of ‘Uthman. By Allah, I will do such-and-such’’

Sa’sa’ah thus returned to the Imam (‘a) carrying the bad news of these people’s insistence on fighting against him. This news saddened the Imam (‘a) very much. He thus had nothing to say but, ‘It is Allah alone Whose help can be sought.’

Once more, Imam Ali (‘a) sent Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas to talk to the leaders of the opposing party, hoping that he, according to his convincing style, would be able to persuade them to put an end to the imminent confrontation before it would practically begin.

Beginning his peace efforts with Talhah, Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas reminded him of his binding pledge of allegiance to Imam Ali (‘a). However, Talhah said, ‘I had to pledge allegiance to Ali because a sword was unsheathed over my neck!’

Refuting this unfounded claim, Abdullah answered, ‘I myself saw you pledging allegiance to him completely obediently. Before he accepted your allegiance, Imam Ali (‘a) had said to you, ‘If you wish, I will pledge allegiance to you.’ You thus answered, ‘No! It is I who will pledge allegiance to you.’’

Talhah could not deny this fact; he therefore went on searching for any apology, saying, ‘It is true that he had said these words to me, but I could not go against the masses who had pledged allegiance to him. By Allah, these people are seducing him. O son of ‘Abbas, you should know that Al-Zubayr and I, who enjoy considerable companionship with Allah’s Messenger and precedence to Islam, came to him when people were surrounding him with unsheathed swords over his head.

Mockingly, he said to us, ‘If you two wish, I will swear allegiance to you (as the caliphs).’ If we at that situation said yes, would he then accept to do it, after all people had already pledged allegiance to him? Now, let him depose himself and pledge allegiance to us! By Allah, he would not do it; rather, he might instigate against us some people who would not consider respect for us.

So, we had to pledge allegiance to him against our wills. Now, we are here to demand with the blood of ‘Uthman. Convey these words to your cousin: If he really wants to spare bloodshed and amend the affairs of this community, he must give up the killers of ‘Uthman and give us hand over them. He must also depose himself from this position and give Muslims freedom to choose

whomever they want. Ali is just like any one of us. If he refuses, then we will deal with him with sword. This is the only thing he may have from us.'

Refuting these illogic words, Abdullah ibn 'Abbas said, 'O Abu-Muhammad, you have not been fair. You should know that you were present before 'Uthman for ten days during which he had to drink the water of his own well after you had prevented him from drinking from other resources of fresh water. You kept on pressing on him in that way until Ali interfered to convince you to let 'Uthman feel free to use the water.

However, you refused. When the people of Egypt saw you doing so, while they considered you to be the companions of Allah's Messenger, they, armed, raided on 'Uthman and assassinated him. After that, the people pledged allegiance to a man (i.e. Imam Ali) whose precedence, excellences, close relation to the Holy Prophet (S), and great struggle for Islam cannot be denied.

Your acquaintance and you then came to him obedient, but never coerced, and pledged allegiance to him. You two then breached your allegiance. It is thus so strange! By Allah, you maintained your allegiance to Abu-Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthman, but you now jump to combat the son of Abu Talib.

By Allah, Ali is never less than any one of you all. As for your demand that he must give you free hand to kill the assassinators of 'Uthman, you know very well who actually killed 'Uthman! As for your saying that Ali should expect sword treatment from you, behold! By Allah, you know for sure that Ali cannot be threatened with sword.'

Talhah could not find any answer to the overwhelming arguments of Abdullah ibn 'Abbas; he therefore said, 'Stop it! Now, I will not debate with you any longer!'

When Abdullah ibn 'Abbas informed Imam Ali ('a) about the words of Talhah, the Imam ('a) painfully prayed Almighty Allah

with these Quranic words:

'O our Lord, decide between us and our people with truth; and You are the best of deciders.' (7:89)

Imam Ali ('a) then sent Abdullah ibn 'Abbas for 'A'ishah to convey to her this message:

Such affairs cannot be amended by women. Besides, you have not been ordered to interfere in such issues. Why are you now pleased to violate the order of Allah in your current display of finery and to leave your house that the Prophet (S) had ordered you to stay in? Violating these orders, you marched to Al-Basrah, killed a number of Muslims, targeted at my deputy governors and dismissed them, gave orders of punishing the Muslims, and deemed lawful the bloodshed of righteous people!

You must consider and watch Almighty Allah, for you know for sure that you were the most intense enemy of 'Uthman. So, what has dissuaded (you) from what was shown (by you previously)? 44

When Abdullah conveyed these words to 'A'ishah, she answered, 'O son of 'Abbas, your cousin thinks that he has had full control over the country! No, by Allah! Whatever he has under his control, we have more than it.'

Abdullah replied, 'O mother, the Leader of the Believers (i.e. Imam Ali) enjoys unparalleled virtues and precedence to Islam. He also the one who suffered tribulations for the sake of the religion more than anyone else did.'

'A'ishah hurried to say, 'Do you not remember the sufferings of Talhah during the Battle of Uhud?'

Abdullah answered, 'By Allah, we do not know any one superior to Ali in this regard.'

Unfortunately, the efforts and advices of Abdullah ibn 'Abbas did not work with 'A'ishah, because she was persistent on mutiny. He

thus said to her, 'Watch and fear Allah with regard to shedding the blood of Muslims.'

'A'ishah answered, 'Muslims have no worth respecting blood unless Ali and those who are with him will kill themselves!'

These reasonless words made Abdullah ibn 'Abbas smile. So, 'A'ishah asked, 'Why are you laughing?' He answered, 'The people who are with Ali are so insightful that they are ready to sacrifice their lives for him.'

Finally, Abdullah ibn 'Abbas left 'A'ishah without reaching at any acceptable solution, because she was too diehard to change her mind.

Abdullah then headed for Al-Zubayr and met him alone, because he feared lest Al-Zubayr's son, Abdullah, would be present with them and spoil the whole matter. In fact, Abdullah the son of Al-Zubayr was one of the bitterest enemies of Islam.

After exchanging discourses and discussing Imam Ali's advice, Al-Zubayr was about to submit to the truth, but some persons hurried to inform Abdullah ibn Al-Zubayr against his father. So, the son interfered and debated with Abdullah ibn 'Abbas. Finally, he could spoil the matter and persuade his father to keep on his attitude of enmity towards Imam Ali ('a).

Thus, the mission of Abdullah ibn 'Abbas failed. He returned to the Imam's camp and put
him in the picture.

Nevertheless, Imam Ali ('a) did not stop; rather, he himself went out and met Talhah and Al-Zubayr. He said to them,

You two must put 'A'ishah on oath by Allah and by His Messenger to be truthful in answering these questions. Does she know any other man than me who is closer to Almighty Allah and to His Messenger? Does

she know any other person than me who embraced Islam before all people did?

Does she know any other person than me who defended the Messenger of Allah with his sword and his spear against the Arab polytheists? Does she not know that I had nothing to do with the bloodshed of 'Uthman, I did not force anybody to pledge allegiance to me, and I never criticized 'Uthman more than you two did?

However, Talhah answered the Imam ('a) improperly while Al-Zubayr did the opposite.

When the Imam ('a) returned to his camp, his companions asked him about what had happened with these two men. The Imam ('a) answered,

They are of different situations. Al-Zubayr has been led to here by obstinacy, and he will not fight against you. As for Talhah, when I asked him about the truth, he answered me with the falsehood. I met him with certitude, and he faced me with dubiety. By Allah, my truth did not work with him, while his falsehood will harm him. He will be killed among many others. 45

Imam Ali ('a) then saw that it was not harmful to pull Al-Zubayr out of this tumult and save him from deviation. Riding on the mule of the Holy Prophet (S) and unarmed, Imam Ali ('a) went out and shouted, 'Where is Al-Zubayr?'

Heavily armed, Al-Zubayr advanced to meet the Imam ('a). When 'A'ishah was informed of this encounter, she feared very much and shouted, 'This is the war! Oh, for Asma'!'46 However, she calmed down when she was informed that Imam Ali ('a) was unarmed.

Imam Ali ('a) embraced Al-Zubayr and asked him gently, *'What for have you mutinied?'*
Al-Zubayr answered, 'I am demanding with the blood of 'Uthman.'

Because Imam Ali ('a) considered this excuse to be too worthless to be accepted, he turned his face away from Al-Zubayr and started reminding him of what the Holy Prophet (S) had predicted about him. He ('a) thus said,

O Zubayr, I adjure you by Allah; do you not remember that day when you and I were under the shed of that tribe exchanging discourses, when the Messenger of Allah (S) passed by me and said, 'According to this situation, you seem to like Al-Zubayr.' I answered, 'Why should I not? He follows my faith and he is my cousin (i.e. paternal aunt's son).' The Messenger of Allah (S) said, 'Behold! He will fight you while he will be wrong.'

Al-Zubayr could not deny this Prophetic prediction; he therefore had to answer affirmatively.

The Imam ('a) thus asked, *'What for are you now fighting against me?'*
Al-Zubayr answered, 'By Allah, I have forgotten this incident. Had I only recollected it, I would never have mutinied against you and I would never have accepted to fight you.'

Thus, Al-Zubayr left surrounded by waves of sorrow. He regretted his situation very much, for he had actually committed a grave sin.

Imam Ali ('a) also returned to his camp where his companions hurried to ask him, 'O Leader of the Believers, you have met that man who was heavily armed while you were unarmed. Why was that?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

Do you know who that man was? He was Al-Zubayr the son of Safiyyah, the Holy Prophet's paternal aunt. He has pledged to me that he will not fight against you. When I reminded him of an incident and a word that was said by Allah's Messenger, the man expressed that if he had remembered that word, he would not have mutinied and faced me.

The Imam's companions cheerfully said, 'All praise be to Allah for this. In this conflict, we feared none but Al-Zubayr and we guarded ourselves against none but him.'47

When all means and efforts made by Imam Ali ('a) for peace and sparing of bloodshed failed, he ('a) ordered his companions to raise the Book of Allah and invite the other party to accept its judgment. However, the Imam ('a) informed his companions that the one to carry out this mission would be martyred.

So, none of them had the courage to carry out this mission except a faithful young man from Al-Kufah, who declared, 'I will do this mission.' Imam Ali ('a) first ignored this young man, expecting that other elder persons would declare their readiness to do it. However, when the Imam ('a) could not find anyone else, he handed over a copy of the Holy Quran to the young man.

Preparing himself mentally for death, the young man set to the battlefield raising the copy of the Holy Quran before the camp of 'A'ishah. He raised his voice, inviting them to accept the judgment of the Holy Quran, but the enemies surrounded him and cut off his right hand. He thus took the copy in his left hand and kept on doing his mission. They then attacked him and could cut off his left hand.

Bravely, the young man held the copy with his teeth while he was bleeding and shouting, 'Watch and consider Allah with regard to shedding our and your blood.' Finally, they started shooting arrows at him until he fell to the ground dead. His mother, who was present, ran towards him weeping and bewailing.48
After the martyrdom of this young man, Imam Ali ('a) believed that there was no other means left but to engage in warfare. Only then, he ('a) said to him companions, *It is now legal to fight these people. You may now enjoy strikes.*

The Imam ('a) then said to Al-Husayn ibn Al-Mundhir who was still young,

Your mission is to maintain this standard (i.e. flag). By Allah, no other standard has ever fluttered or will be fluttering fairer than this one, save the standard that fluttered over the head of Allah's Messenger.

The Imam ('a) then said these poetic lines:

Whose flag is this black one? It'is shadow is fluttering. When Husayn is asked to advance with it, he will definitely do.

He advances it towards death, and when he enters with it to the ponds of death, both death and blood will then drop.[49]

The Imam ('a) then mobilized his army generally and assigned Malik Al- Ashtar, 'Ammar ibn Yasir, and other prominent personalities as the commanders of his army. The Imam ('a) put on the armor of the Holy Prophet (S), rode on his mule, stooped in the fore of the lines of his army, and stretched the standard over himself.

On the other front, the soldiers of 'A'ishah lined up their rows and advanced the camel on which 'A'ishah was riding, driven by Ka'b ibn Thawr.

Reciprocal war songs could be heard from the two armies.

Imam Ali ('a), unsheathing his famous sword Dhu'l-Faqar in his right hand and raising the standard in his left, attacked the enemies and a general clash took place. They fought as intensely as fighting might be; Imam Ali's army intended to protect their leader and 'A'ishah's army intended to protect their mother.

Then, some man-to-man encounters took place, in all of them victory was the share of Imam Ali's soldiers.

When Abdullah ibn Al-Zubayr advanced to the battlefield, Malik Al-Ashtar decided to come upon him. Hence, Malik sat on Abdullah's chest and he was about to kill him, but Abdullah called for help, shouting, 'Kill both of us; Malik and me!'

However, Malik led Abdullah to a ditch and threw him there. He then said to him, 'Had it not been for your family relationship with Allah's Messenger, your body organs would never have met one another anymore!'

When 'A'ishah learnt about the encounter of her nephew with Malik, she lost her nerve and decided to give a ten thousand dirham prize for anyone who would convey to her the glad tidings of the survival of her nephew!

As for Al-Zubayr, he was well known for his soft-heartedness. When Imam Ali ('a) spoke to him, Al-Zubayr decided to withdraw the battle. He came towards 'A'ishah and said, 'In all of my situations in my whole lifetime, I knew where I should put my foot, except for the current situation of mine. By Allah, I do not know whether I should continue or I should withdraw.'

'A'ishah recognized that Al-Zubayr had responded to the truth; she therefore said to him mockingly, 'It seems that you have been frightened by the swords of the descendants of Abd Al-Muttalib!'

These words motivated Al-Zubayr negatively. Moreover, his son Abdullah dishonored his father, saying, 'When you decided to go on this matter, you were totally insightful. However, as you saw the flags of the son of Abu Talib and knew that nothing but death was under these flags' etc.'

These words of ascribing cowardice to Al-Zubayr motivated his feelings more. He thus said to his son, 'Woe to you! I have just given Ali my word that I would not fight against him.'

The son said, 'You can expiate this word by manumitting one of your slaves.'

So, Al-Zubayr manumitted his slave and advanced towards the battlefield to prove that he was never coward. When he became certain of the falsity of his situation, Al-Zubayr retreated and decide to go back home. In an area known as Wadi Al-Siba', 'Umar

ibn Jurmuz met Al-Zubayr and said to him, 'You have started a war, whether you were right or wrong, and now you retreat from it. Are you repentant or too weak to continue?'

However, Ibn Jurmuz decided to assassinate Al-Zubayr; he therefore played fast and loose on him until he could stab him, cut off his head, and bring it to Imam Ali ('a).

Upon seeing the sword of Al-Zubayr, Imam Ali ('a) felt very sad. He thus said,

This sword removed many agonies from the face of Allah's Messenger on many occasions.

In the midst of the fighting, Marwan ibn Al-Hakam seized an opportunity, shot a dart on Talhah ibn 'Ubaydullah, and could kill him. He then declared, 'I will demand with no more blood. The blood of 'Uthman was in the neck of this man (i.e. Talhah).'

On another occasion, Marwan said to one of the sons of 'Uthman, 'I have taken full revenge for the assassination of your father from Talhah.'

By the killing of Talhah and Al-Zubayr, 'A'ishah's army lost their commanders. They therefore started receiving orders directly from 'A'ishah. Around the howdah of 'A'ishah, the Banu-Dabbah individuals surrounded to fight in defense of her. These people were the most hardhearted and immoral ones.

Likewise, the tribes of Al-Azd and Banu-Najiyah gathered around the camel to fight. In fact, this camel, named 'Askar, was the war flag under which the army of 'A'ishah fought. Unfortunately, in defense of this camel, a huge number of people were killed. For instance, from the tribe of Quraysh only, seventy persons were killed. Whenever one was killed, other people would hurry to take the rein of the camel in their hands.

With words of enthusiasm, ‘A'ishah could make so many people die under the feet of her camel.

Historicists have recorded horrible pictures of the bloodshed that took place in defense of ‘A'ishah’s camel. However, Imam Ali (‘a) understood that this war would not come to an end as long as that camel stood on its feet. He therefore raised his voice with these instructive words,

Cut off the legs of the camel, for it is devil. If you do not cut off its legs, the Arabs will cease to exist. Swords will be kept up and down until this camel falls on the ground.[50]

Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) attacked the camel and could cut off its right foreleg and Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) could cut off its left foreleg. So, the camel fell to the ground roaring so hideously.

Upon seeing their deity falling to the ground, the troops of ‘A'ishah escaped in the deserts. Imam Ali (‘a) then ordered that the accursed camel should be set to fire and its ash should be spread in the space so that nothing of it would remain to cause another sedition and ordeal from Muslims. When this order was carried out, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

May Allah curse such an animal! It was very much similar to the calf that was worshipped by the Israelites.

Stretching his sight towards the ash, Imam Ali (‘a) recited this holy Quranic verse:

Look at your god to whose worship you kept so long; we will certainly burn it, then we will certainly scatter it a wide scattering in the sea. (20:97)

By the killing of the camel, the war was over and Imam Ali (‘a) achieved victory, causing defeat and loss to his rivals.

Imam Ali (‘a) then sent his two sons, Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, and Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr [51] to meet ‘A'ishah. Muhammad,

‘A'ishah’s brother, extended his hand inside ‘A'ishah’s howdah. She, out of fear, shouted, ‘Who is this?’

He answered, ‘I am the most hateful blood relative to you.’

She said, ‘You are the son of Al-Khath’amiyyah (i.e. the woman of the tribe of Khath’am).’

Muhammad said, ‘I am your righteous brother.’

She answered, ‘You are the impious brother!’

Muhammad asked, ‘Has anything wrong happened to you?’

She answered, ‘One arrow hit me; rather, it has not harmed me.’

Muhammad pulled out that arrow and, at the darkest hour of night, led the howdah of his sister to the house of Abdullah ibn Khalaf Al-Khuza’i where Safiyyah bint Al-Harith lived. She stayed there for several days.

The people of Al-Basrah were harshly affected by this war whose casualties were more than thirty thousand persons.52

Imam Ali (‘a), accompanied by his virtuous companions like ‘Ammar ibn Yasir, passed by the casualties of the war from the army of ‘A'ishah. He saw Abd Al-Rahman ibn ‘Attab’s dead body and said, ‘This is the chief of Quraysh!’ 53 He passed by Abdullah ibn Khalaf Al-Khuza’i’s dead body, which was attired the best of clothes. People said, ‘This man was the head of people.’ Imam Ali (‘a) replied, *‘He is not the head of people; rather, he was honorable and self-esteemed.’*

The Imam (‘a) then checked all the dead bodies. When he passed by the dead bodies of the chiefs of Quraysh, he said,

These people of Quraysh had tried to cut off my nose. By Allah, it is loathsome for me to see you killed, although I had already warned you against the bites of swords. However, you were too young to weigh up

what you were following. Nevertheless, this is the time of your death and this is the bad end result. I seek Allah's guard against bad end results.

Among the dead bodies, Imam Ali ('a) noticed that there was a copy of the Holy Quran hung to the neck of the dead body of Ka'b ibn Sur. He therefore ordered his companions to take the Quranic copy from the neck and put it in a pure place. He again ordered them to make the dead body in the posture of sitting. When they did, the Imam ('a) talked to the dead body, saying,

O Ka'b, I have found what my Lord promised me to be true. Have you too found what your Lord promised to be true? 54

Imam Ali ('a) repeated the same thing with the dead body of Talhah.

Upon this situation, one of the companions asked the Imam ('a), 'What is the value of your words with these dead bodies that cannot hear?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

They do hear my words in the same way as the dead bodies of the Battle of Badr had heard the words of Allah's Messenger. However, if they are allowed to answer, you will see wonders!

The Imam ('a) then passed by the dead body of Abdullah ibn Rabi'ah and said,

What has made this miserable one mutiny and go up against me? Was it on account of his faith or was it on account of support for 'Uthman? In fact, 'Uthman did not have any good idea about this man and his father.

Following the practice of the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali ('a) issued a general amnesty, granting security to all of those who had participated with 'A'ishah in her war against him. Having seen this divine practice, many non-Arab people converted to Islam.55

In addition to the general amnesty, Imam Ali (‘a) issued the following decisions:

1. The wounded must not be finished off.

2. The absconders must not be stabbed from the back.

3. No woman must be treated as bondmaid due to captivity.

4. No private property of the enemies must be taken.

5. No fleer must be chased.

Imam Ali (‘a) then gave special amnesty to ‘A'ishah, Marwan ibn Al-Hakam, Musa ibn Talhah, and ‘Umar ibn Sa’id ibn Al-’As who were the commanders of ‘A'ishah’s army.

The Imam (‘a) then moved to meet with ‘A'ishah. However, Safiyyah bint Al- Harith met him with harsh words, saying, ‘O slayer of the dear ones! May Allah bereave your sons of you as same as you have bereaved me of my sons!’

Safiyyah’s sons were killed in that battle.

However, Imam Ali (‘a) did not answer her with anything; rather, he straightly went towards ‘A'ishah’s chamber who said to him, ‘You are now the king. So, be lenient.’

Imam Ali (‘a), at that meeting, ordered ‘A'ishah to leave Al-Basrah and to stay in her house, carrying out the order of Almighty Allah and His Prophet.

When he was about to leave the house, Safiyyah repeated the same words in his face. He, this time, answered, *‘If I was really the slayer of the dear ones, I would kill these ones hiding in this house!’*

In that same house, many wounded persons were kept secretly. Hence, Safiyyah kept silent because she feared for these persons.

The companions of the Imam wanted to kill these persons, but the Imam (‘a) did not allow them.

However, ‘A'ishah desisted Imam Ali’s order to leave; therefore, he sent Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas to her to make sure that she would carry out his order.

‘A'ishah did not allow Abdullah to visit her, but he entered forcibly, took a pillow, and sat on it in front of ‘A'ishah. She criticized him, saying, ‘You have violated the Prophetic practice twice; you entered my house without permission and sat on my private property before I permitted you to sit.’

Ibn ‘Abbas answered, ‘By Allah, your house is only that one which Allah has ordered you to stay in. Amir Al-Mu'minin (*i.e. the Leader of the Believers*) is ordering you to return to the country wherefrom you came.’

Underestimating Imam Ali (‘a), ‘A'ishah answered, ‘May Allah have mercy upon the true leader of the believers; namely, ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab.’

So, ‘A'ishah did not confess that ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan was also the leader of the believers; rather, she restricted this name to ‘Umar.

Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas said, ‘Yes, it is. Ali ibn Abi Talibis the leader of the believers.’

‘A'ishah stubbornly said, ‘I do not accept Ali as a leader of the believers!’

These words injured Abdullah, who replied, ‘Your fathers were as insignificant as the milk of a milkless camel. Then, you are forbidden to do what other women are lawful to do. You have no right to issue orders or prohibitions.’

These words saddened ‘A'ishah who, shedding tears, said, ‘Yes, I will return home. Verily, the most loathsome country to me is a country wherein you live.’

Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas lost his nerve and said, ‘By Allah, this is unfair reward from you to us, because we have made you a mother for the believers and made your father siddiq (*i.e. veracious*) of this community!’

With worthless words, ‘A'ishah answered, ‘Do you remind me of the favors of Allah’s Messenger to us?’

Abdullah answered, ‘Yes, I remind you of the favors done to you by him, because if you had had his like, you would certainly have reminded us ceaselessly of his favors.’

Thus, Abdullah left ‘A'ishah bursting with rage, returned to Imam Ali (‘a), and informed him of what had happened.

Imam Ali (‘a) thanked for him this situation.[56]

The Imam (‘a) then released ‘A'ishah in a handsome manner and sent with her a group of women in male attire. ‘A'ishah thought that she was accompanied by men; she therefore became angry and went on shouting, ‘May Allah do such-and-such to the son of Abu Talib! He is sending men to escort me.’

‘A'ishah forgot that she had led thousands of men and allowed herself to enter battlefields.

However, when the accompanying team arrived in Al-Madinah, they threw away their masculine turbans and swords to prove that they were women. Upon this situation, ‘A'ishah knew that her accusation was false. She thus said, ‘May Allah award the son of Abu Talib Paradise.’[57]

Jurisprudential View

The majority of Muslim jurisprudents have decided those who flared up the Battle of the Camel as having committed a sin, since their deed was not justified at all. They furthermore described

them as transgressors. Of course, the religious duty was to fight against them, because the Holy Quran declares,

And if two parties of the believers quarrel, (you must) make peace between them, but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, (then you must) fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah's command. Then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably. Surely, Allah loves those who act equitably. (49:9)

Among the master scholars of Muslim jurisprudence who issued this judgment were Abu-Hanifah, 58 Ibn Hajar, 59 and Al-Juwayni.60

In brief, the powers that mutinied against Imam Ali (‘a) had no goal other than achieving personal profits, if not authority and power.

Al-Buladhari states that when Al-Zubayr conquered Al-Basrah and seized the funds that were in the public treasury, he recited this holy Quranic verse:

Allah promised you many acquisitions, which you will take. (48/20)

When Imam Ali (‘a) eliminated the mutiny and entered the house of the public treasury, he said,

O world, find someone else to seduce!

Consequences Of The Battle Of The Camel

Because of the Battle of the Camel, the Muslim community had to go through gross losses and unbearable calamities. This war also put Imam Ali (‘a) to an extremely difficult test.

Let us now refer to some of these bad consequences:

(1) The Battle of the Camel paved the way for Mu'awiyah to rebel against Imam Ali's government, because the slogan that was raised by the opposing party was their demand with the blood of 'Uthman, while they had no family relationship with 'Uthman. In fact, Mu'awiyah was the cousin of 'Uthman and he had a greater claim to demand with his blood.

(2) This mutiny sowed the seeds of disunity and discrepancy among Muslims and devastated any spirit of mutual affection and love that might have been among them.

After this war, Muslims divided into many conflicting parties. The tribes of Rabi'ah and Yemen who lived in Al-Basrah stood against their relatives who lived in Al-Kufah and each party demanded with vengeance for their people who were killed in this battle.

(3) This war toppled the reverence of government and gave people the dare to mutiny against it. As a result, many opportunist parties were formed, just as the parties of Abdullah ibn Al-Zubayr, the Umayyads, and the Khawarij. Of course, the one and only goal of these parties was to come to power and to profiteer the fortunes of the State.

(4) This war opened wide the door of fighting among Muslims. Before this incident, Muslims were too afraid to shed the blood of each other.

(5) This war resulted in retarding Islam, paralyzing its motion forward, and suspending its growth. After the Battle of the Camel, Imam Ali ('a) dedicated all of his activities to resisting the mutiny of Mu'awiyah.

In this regard, a philosopher says, 'If internal wars had not been erupted and if Islam had kept on its first progress, it could have conquered the whole world. The main concern of 'A'ishah was to overcome Ali.'[61]

(6) The Battle of the Camel opened the door to abusing the inviolabilities of the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a). ‘A'ishah in fact waged war against the Holy Prophet’s Household. Had she won this war, she would most certainly have sentenced death penalty to Imam Ali (‘a) and his sons.

- 1. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:139; Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 8:340; Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Ma’rifat Al-Sahabah 4:33; Al- Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:82; Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa'id 9:235.
- 2. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 2:3; Sunan Al-Darimi 2:241; Sahih Al-Bukhari 8:37; Sahih Muslim 1:17; Sunan Ibn Majah 2:86.
- 3. Sunan Abi-Dawud 2:409; Sunan Al-Tirmidhi 3:329; Sunan Al-Nassa'i 7:126.
- 4. Ibn Taghri, Al-Nujum Al-Zahirah 2:302.
- 5. Tarikh Al-Tabari 5:172; Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 5:91; Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa’l-Siyasah 1:53.
- 6. Tarikh At-Tabari 3:268.
- 7. The Holy Prophet’s wives are called the mothers of the believers, because the Holy Quran has ordered all Muslims to consider them so, saying,

  The Prophet has a greater claim on the faithful than they have on themselves, and his wives are (as) their mothers. (33:6)

  Al-Zamakhshari, in his famous book of tafsir (exegesis of the Holy Quran) 3:251, quotes Mujahid as saying, ‘Every prophet is as the father of his community; therefore, the believers are brothers of one another, because the Holy Prophet (S) is their father-in-faith. The Holy Quran has also likened the Holy Prophet’s wives to the mothers of the believers in certain cases, such as the obligation of respecting them and the forbiddance of marrying them after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S).

Beyond such cases, they are not treated as blood relatives of the believers. From this cause, 'A'ishah is reported to have said, 'We, the Prophet's wives, are not the mothers of the believing women.' She meant that they are only as mothers for the believing men, because they are forbidden to have them as wives after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S). Confirming this fact, the daughters of the Prophet's widows are not forbidden to marry any Muslim man. [Translator]

- 8. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:79.
- 9. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:231.
- 10. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:106.
- 11. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 54.
- 12. Tarikh Al-Tabari 3:475; Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:107.
- 13. Abdullah ibn 'Abbas has reported that the Holy Prophet (S), one day, said to his wives all of whom were present before him, 'Which one of you will ride the huge camel and the dogs of Al-Haw'ab will bark at her? To the left and right sides of her, so many people will be killed and all of them will be in Hellfire. She will barely survive that incident.'
  This narration is mentioned in the following reference books: Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:297; Ibn Kathir, Tarikh 6:21; Al-Suyuti, Al-Khasa'is 2:137.
  Referring to this narration, Ibn Abd Al-Barr, in Al-Istiab, comments, 'This is one of the points that prove the Prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (S).'
- 14. Al-Mas'udi, Murju Al-Dhahab 2:347; Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:181.
- 15. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:64.
- 16. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:64.
- 17. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:50.
- 18. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:157.
- 19. Muhammad Baqir Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:55.
- 20. When he conquered Makkah, the Holy Prophet (S) gathered its people who were still unbelievers and asked them, 'What do you think I am going to do with you?'

Humble and fearful, they all answered, 'We expect goodness from you, for you are a noble brother and the son of a noble brother.'
Hence, the Holy Prophet (S), out of his magnanimity and generosity of spirit, said, 'Go! You are now released.' (Al-Bayhaqi, Ma'rifat Al-Sunan wa'l-Athar 7:61.) [Translator]

- 21. Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:319-22.
- 22. Al-Haythami, Majma' Al-Zawa'id 7:235; Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 14:322; Ibn 'Asakir, Tarikh Madinat Dimashq 20:361; Al-Qanaduzi, Yanabi' Al-Mawaddah 1:173; Abu-Ja'far Al-Iskafi, Al-Mi'yar wa'l-Muwaznah, pp. 28; Al-Hakim Al-Hasakani, Shawahid Al-Tanzil 2:481' etc. [Translator]
- 23. Described by the Holy Prophet (S) as the good and the son of the good, 'Ammar ibn Yasir was one of the contributors to the construction of the edifice of Islam and one of those whom were harshly persecuted for the sake of Allah. Among the Companions, he was known for his self-denial and wholehearted devotion to the truth. He also enjoyed a highly considerable standing with the Holy Prophet (S).
- 24. Sahl ibn Hunayf Al-Ansari (i.e. of the Ansar) Al-Awsi (i.e. of the tribe of Aws), whose nickname is Abu-Thabit, participated in the Battle of Badr as well as all the other military expeditions of the Holy Prophet (S). In the Battle of Uhud, he was one of the few warriors who remained steadfast rather than absconding from the battlefield like many others. He had sworn allegiance to the Holy Prophet (S) that he would follow him permanently and sacrifice his life for him. He was then one of the companions of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) who appointed him as his deputy governor of Al-Basrah. He then participated in the Battle of Siffin with the Imam who, afterwards, employed him as the deputy governor of Persia. He died in AH 38 and Imam Ali ('a) himself offered the ritual Funeral Prayer on his dead body. (Ibn Hajar Al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib Al-Tahdhib 4:428)

- 25. ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf Al-Ansari Al-Awsi participated in the Battle of Uhud and all the battles that followed. In his reign, ‘Umar appointed him as the deputy land surveyor of some areas in Iraq. He thus did his job completely. Imam Ali (‘a) then appointed him as the deputy governor of Al-Basrah. He moved to Al-Kufah. He died during the reign of Mu’awiyah. (Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Ma’rifat Al-Sahabah 3:376)
- 26. Sa’d ibn Al-Harith ibn ‘Amr was one of the most virtuous companions of the Holy Prophet (S). He participated in the Battle of the Camel with Imam Ali (‘a) and in the Battle of Siffin where he was martyred.
- 27. Jariyah ibn Qudamah ibn Zuhayr was from the tribe of Banu-Sa’d. He reported from the Holy Prophet (S) a number of his discourses. He participated with Imam Ali (‘a) in the Battle of the Camel. The Imam (‘a) sent him to Al-Basrah to fight Ibn Al-Hadrami whom Mu’awiyah had sent to occupy the city. Hence, Jariyah laid siege on Ibn Al-Hadrami and could kill him.
- 28. Abu-Mas’ud Al-Ansari was appointed by Imam Ali (‘a) as the deputy governor of Al-Kufah. Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) married one of the virtuous daughters of Abu-Mas’ud.
- 29. Abu-Umamah Al-’Abdi ibn Al-’Ajlan Al-Bahili participated in the Battle of the Camel
with Imam Ali (‘a) and reported that the Imam (‘a) neither put to death any injured warrior, nor ran after any absconder, nor divested any killed person of his possessions or military personal equipments.
- 30. Known as Dhu’l-Shahadatayn (the two-testimony man: i.e. the man whose testimony alone is regarded as two testimonies, since one testimony is inadmissible in many lawsuits according to the religious law of Islam. The Holy Prophet considered Khuzaymah’s testimony to be equal to two testimonies), Khuzaymah ibn Thabit belonged to the tribe of Aws. His nickname is Abu-’Abbad. He participated in the Battle of Badr and all the military expeditions that followed. He also fought to the side of Imam Ali (‘a) in the Battle of Siffin.

When ‘Ammar was martyred in that battle, Khuzaymah unsheathed his sword and fought ceaselessly until he was martyred. He used to say: I have heard Allah’s Messenger saying, ‘’Ammar will be killed by the transgressing group.’ (Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab)

- 31. Hashim ibn ‘Utbah ibn Abi-Waqqas, a great Companion, entered Islam on the day of the Conquest of Makkah. In the Battle of Al-Yarmuk, he lost one of his eyes. In the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali (‘a) appointed him as a commander of a brigade. He was martyred in this battle defending Imam Ali (‘a).
- 32. Sulayman ibn Surad Al-Khuza’i is one of the loftiest companions of the Holy Prophet (S).
  His name was Yasar, but the Holy Prophet (S) gave him the name of Sulayman. After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S), Sulayman moved to Al-Kufah. He participated in the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin with Imam Ali (‘a). He was one of those who revolted against the Umayyad rule after the martyrdom of Imam Al-Husayn (‘a).
- 33. Al-Ash’ath ibn Qays Al-Kindi, leading seventy persons from his tribe, came to the Holy
  Prophet (S) and declared conversion to Islam. Although he had participated with Imam Ali (‘a) in the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin, he deviated from the truth thereafter. He was one of those who played a negative role in the issue of raising the copies of the Holy Quran by the army of Mu’awiyah in the Battle of Siffin. Moreover, this man had many disgraceful situations with the Imam (‘a).
- 34. The son of the chief of the Ansar, Qays ibn Sa’d was one of the most prominent Companions. His father ordered him to serve the Holy Prophet (S). He participated with Imam Ali (‘a) in all of his military campaigns. He is thus regarded as one of the pious and virtuous heroes of Islam.
- 35. Abu-’Amrah’s full name is Bashir ibn ‘Umar and his mother is Kabshah the sister of Hassan ibn Thabit, the famous poet. He participated in the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin where he was martyred.

- 36. Hujr ibn ‘Adi ibn Al-Adbar Al-Kindi, one of the most famous Companions in jihad and firm faith, visited the Holy Prophet (S) and participated in the Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah. He also joined Imam Ali (‘a) in the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin. He was one of the most sincere, most dedicated, and most loyal to Imam Ali (‘a). When he conquered Marj ‘Adhra', he was the first to declare the professions of Islam. Mu’awiyah killed him because of his loyalty to Imam Ali (‘a).
- 37. ‘Amr ibn Al-Hamq Al-Khuza’i, one of the most famous Companions in jihad and struggle for Islam, was one of those who objected to ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan. He participated in the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin with Imam Ali (‘a). When Mu’awiyah came to power, ‘Amr was exposed to severe punishments and calamities. Ibn Ummi’l-Hakam killed ‘Amr in the Arabian Peninsula and sent his head to Mu’awiyah. Giving vent to their anger, the Umayyad ruling authorities carried ‘Amr’s head and wandered about the cities.
- 38. Known as the learned authority of the Muslim community (i.e. habr Al-ummah), Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas was the Holy Prophet’s cousin (i.e. son of his paternal uncle) and Imam Ali’s consultant and assistant. He participated with the Imam (‘a) in the Battle of the Camel, the Battle of Siffin, and the Battle of Al-Nahrawan.
- 39. ‘Ubaydullah ibn ‘Abbas was only twelve years old when the Holy Prophet (S) passed away. For some time, Imam Ali (‘a) appointed him as the deputy governor of Yemen. He participated in the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin.
- 40. Abdullah ibn Ja’far ibn Abd Al-MutTalibb is one of the most generous people of the Arabs. He participated in the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin. More details of Abdullah’s life account has been mentioned in the book of Lady Zaynab written by the author of this book.
- 41. ‘Umar ibn Abi-Salamah was nine years old when he met with the Holy Prophet (S). He participated in the Battle of the Camel with Imam Ali (‘a).

- 42. Ju'dah ibn Hubayrah ibn Abi-Wahab is the son of Hind the daughter of Abu Talib. He participated in the three battles of his maternal uncle, Imam Ali ('a).
- 43. Muhammad ibn Habib Al-Qirashi, Al-Muhabbar, pp. 289-93.
- 44. Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:77-8.
- 45. Muhammad ibn Zakariyya, Waqi'at Siffin, pp. 35.
- 46. By Asma', 'A'ishah meant her sister (Asma' bint Abi-Bakr) who was the wife of Al-Zubayr. She therefore said these wailing words, because she thought that Imam Ali ('a) would certainly kill Al-Zubayr if any armed encounter would be broken out between them.
- 47. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:73.
- 48. Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 2:246.
- 49. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 1:180.
- 50. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq'at Siffin, pp. 45.
- 51. Although his father was the head of the opponents of Imam Ali ('a), Muhammad the son of Abu-Bakr was one of the most faithful devotees of the Imam ('a). Muhammad's mother, Asma' bint 'Umays, was married by Imam Ali ('a) after she had been widowed, and thus Muhammad was brought up by the Imam ('a). In fact, history has not been fair to this great personality, because of his objections to his father who usurped caliphate from the Imam and to his sister 'A'ishah who led an armed campaign against the Imam ('a). [Translator]
- 52. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, in Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 4:326, states that the casualties of the Battle of the Camel were twenty thousands from the army of 'A'ishah and five hundred from the army of Imam Ali ('a). A similar number was mentioned by Al-Buladhari in Ansab Al-Ashraf 1:180.
- 53. Majalis Tha'lab, pp. 156.
- 54. In this statement, Imam Ali ('a) quoted the following holy Quranic verse:

And the dwellers of Paradise will call out to the inmates of Hellfire, 'Surely, we have found what our Lord promised us to be true. Have you too found what your Lord promised to be true?' They will say, 'Yes.' Then, a crier will cry out among them that the curse of Allah is on the unjust. (7:44)

- 55. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:256.
- 56. Ibn Abd-Rabbih, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 3:103-4.
- 57. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:80.
- 58. Al-Khawarizmi, Manaqib Abi-Hanifah 2:82-3.
  Abu-Hanifah states, 'Undoubtedly, Ali is always right in all of the encounters he had to face. If Ali had not acted upon the religious process with regard to his manners of facing these opposing parties, none would have recognized the very religious duty under such circumstances. Unquestionably, Ali fought against Talhah and Al-Zubayr after they had breached the allegiance they had made to him. In the Battle of the Camel, he acted towards them with pure fairness. Of course, Ali is the most knowledgeable of all Muslims. Hence, to follow the Prophetic practice necessitated fighting the transgressing party.'
- 59. Al-Nawawi, Tuhfat Al-Muhtaj 4:110.
  Ibn Hajar states, 'Those who fought against Ali in the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin had accused him falsely of collusion with the assassinators of 'Uthman. Of course, Ali was innocent of this accusation and he is in reality too high to do so. In general, it is obligatory upon any Imam (i.e. leader of the Muslim community) to fight against the transgressing party, since the Sahabah (i.e. Companions) have unanimously agreed on this point. Following the example of Ali when he sent Abdullah ibn 'Abbas to ask the Khawarij about the reason for their mutiny against the legal ruler, an Imam is required to send to the transgressing party a decent, shrewd, and well-wishing person to have an idea about their opinion and the points they had not accepted from the Imam.
- 60. Al-Juwayni, Al-Irshad fi Usul Al-I'tiqad, pp. 433.
  In this book, the author, who is known as Imam Al-Haramayn, states, ''Ali ibn Abi Talib was the true Imam when he

held the position of leadership on the strength of the masses' demand. Those who fought against him were transgressors.'

- 61. Mahmud Abu-Rayyah, Shaykh Al-Masirah, pp. 173.

The Rebellion Of Mu'awiyah

As has previously been cited in this book, it was 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab who gave Mu'awiyah free hand to have authority over Muslims and to create for himself a great power that he then used against Imam Ali ('a).

Accordingly, Mu'awiyah, in his capacity as the deputy governor of Syria, used the fortunes of this large district for supporting his sovereignty economically and politically. He purchased the loyalties of many people, bestowed the tribal chiefs with huge funds, and spread ignorance and illiteracy among the people of Syria so that they would never revolt or support his enemy against him.

Due to his familiarity with the political program of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, Mu'awiyah was sure that 'Uthman would be killed and his government would collapse. He therefore did not set to support him; rather, he left him alone facing the swords of the insurgents. He then took the blood and shirt of 'Uthman as a winning card to seize power.

'A'ishah also played a positive role in this issue and paved the way for Mu'awiyah to lead an armed mutiny against Imam Ali ('a). What's more, Mu'awiyah knew for sure that Imam Ali ('a) would never keep him in that position even for a moment and that he would most certainly divest him of all fortunes that he had collected from the drudgery of the poor people.

Mu'awiyah Deceives The Prominent Personalities

Mu'awiyah wrote a letter to Al-Zubayr and Talhah, seducing them into the position of caliphate. They thus believed his trickery and mutinied against Imam Ali ('a).

When Mu'awiyah learnt about Abdullah ibn 'Umar's refraining from pledging allegiance to Imam Ali ('a), he wrote him a letter in which he awakened his desire for caliphate and sought his help in going up against Imam Ali ('a).

However, Abdullah ibn 'Umar wrote back, declaring his refusal to join Mu'awiyah and trying to make justifications for his refraining from pledging allegiance to Imam Ali ('a). 1

Mu'awiyah then wrote another letter to Sa'd ibn Abi-Waqqas, asking him to rise up and demand with the blood of 'Uthman. He also raised in him hopes for being the caliph.

Sa'd wrote back a letter to Mu'awiyah in which he confessed that Imam Ali('a) was always the worthiest of caliphate, but some matters deterred him from holding this position since the first day. Sa'd also refused to respond to Mu'awiyah.2

Mu'awiyah then concluded that he would not be able to challenge Imam Ali ('a) unless 'Amr ibn Al-'As, the sliest of all Arabs, would join his party. He thus wrote a letter to 'Amr and asked him to come to Damascus.

When he received Mu'awiyah's letter, 'Amr hesitated to interfere in this clash. He therefore sought advice from his two sons Abdullah and Muhammad. The earlier suggested that his father should retire to his home and refrain from answering Mu'awiyah, while the latter, like the other youths of Quraysh who had desires for wealth and reputation, suggested to his father that he should find himself a good place in this dispute and join Mu'awiyah.

To his son Abdullah, 'Amr said, 'You have ordered me to follow what is in the benefit of my religion, while your brother has ordered me to follow what is in the benefit of my worldly life.'

‘Amr could not sleep at that night, because he was thinking of the matter. Unfortunately, before sunrise, he had preferred his worldly life to his religion and decided to join Mu’awiyah. Once he entered the city of Damascus, ‘Amr started weeping heavily before the people of Syria and raising his voice with these words: ‘Oh, for ‘Uthman! I declare the death of modesty and piety!’

It is worth mentioning that ‘Amr ibn Al-’As incited all people against ‘Uthman and exerted all his efforts to overthrow him. He even encouraged the shepherds he would meet in his way to shed the blood of ‘Uthman.

When Mu’awiyah met with ‘Amr, he asked him to join his party and help him wage a war against Imam Ali (‘a). Expressing his opinion frankly, ‘Amr said, ‘Listen, Mu’awiyah! By Allah, the Arabs would never compare you to Ali in anything. Besides, Ali is unbeatable in armed clashes. If we want to match him up with any person from Quraysh, we will certainly wrong him.’

Mu’awiyah answered, ‘This is true. However, we can fight him for maintaining what we are now having in possession and we will claim that he has killed ‘Uthman!’

When ‘Uthman’s name was intruded in the issue, ‘Amr laughed sarcastically and informed Mu’awiyah that the persons whom should be most responsible for the assassination of ‘Uthman were Mu’awiyah and himself.[3]

Mu’awiyah realized that ‘Amr would not respond to him unless he would give him something big in return. So, he surprised him with this question, ‘O ‘Amr, do you love me?’

Scornfully, ‘Amr said, ‘Why should I love you? Should I love you for an otherworldly benefit? By Allah, nothing of the otherworldly affairs is with you. Should I love you for this worldly benefit? By Allah, this will not be before you give me a share with you.’

Mu'awiyah, complying with 'Amr's request, said, 'You are my partner in this.'

To guarantee his share, 'Amr said, 'You should now pledge to appoint me as the governor of Egypt and the surrounding villages.'

Mu'awiyah said, 'You will have my word.'

Starting his mission as the assistant of Mu'awiyah, 'Amr advised him to write a letter to the people of Al-Madinah, accusing Imam Ali ('a) of having a role in the assassination of 'Uthman and promising that the new caliph would be subjected to a process of election.

However, this trick of Mu'awiyah did not work with the people of Al-Madinah who answered him back with violent language and reminded him of his origin, since his father and he were the arch-enemies of Islam.4

Mu'awiyah sent a similar letter to Qays ibn Sa'd asking for his assistance and promising that he would appoint him as the governor of Iraq and Al-Hijaz. However, Qays wrote back to Mu'awiyah a letter full of words of reproach and scolding.

When Mu'awiyah read the letter of Qays, he deceptively informed the people of Syria that Qays had responded to his call and would be ready to fight against the one who had killed 'Uthman.5

Of course, the nave people of Syria believed this lie and let themselves be carried away by Mu'awiyah.

When the courier of Imam Ali ('a); namely, Jarir Al-Bajali, was present before Mu'awiyah to invite him to swear allegiance to the Imam ('a), Mu'awiyah played a trick on the most prominent personality in Syria, Shurahbil Al-Kindi.

He agreed with some persons of his followers to meet Shurahbil separately and convince him that Imam Ali ('a) killed 'Uthman. Starting the trick, Mu'awiyah summoned Shurahbil and informed

him that Jarir was there to convey to him the order of Imam Ali (‘a) to pay homage to him. He thus claimed that he would not make this decision before he would consult the people of Syria since, as he claimed, he was one of them.

However, when Shurahbil was informed by these followers of Mu’awiyah that Imam Ali (‘a) was the killer of ‘Uthman, he believed them. Hurrying to Mu’awiyah, Shurahbil said, ‘Where are the people? Ali has killed ‘Uthman!

If you, Mu’awiyah, pledge allegiance to Ali, we will certainly take you out of Syria!’[6]

In brief, Mu’awiyah could establish his rule on such fabrications.

Correspondence Between Imam Ali And Mu’awiyah

Before entering into warfare, Imam Ali (‘a) sent a big number of letters to Mu’awiyah advising him to pledge allegiance to him, to obey him like all Muslims did, and to avoid disuniting the community. However, Mu’awiyah the cunning and hypocrite did not respond to the Imam (‘a); rather, he raised the slogan of demanding with ‘Uthman’s blood.

When the Imam (‘a) was consensually selected as the caliph and homage was paid to him, he wrote this letter to Mu’awiyah:

People killed ‘Uthman before they had taken counsel with me and they then pledged allegiance to me after they had taken counsel with each other and agreed unanimously on so. Once you receive this letter of mine, you may pay homage to me and delegate the chief personalities of Syria to me.

When he received this letter, Mu’awiyah wrote back that Imam Ali (‘a) had nothing with him but strikes of swords and cutting off

of heads.7

After Imam Ali (‘a) had finished with the Battle of the Camel and had the affairs back under his control, he sent this letter to Mu’awiyah:

In effect, the predetermination and unmistakable act of God are poured down from the heavens like raindrops. Thus are the ordains of the Almighty and All-majestic Lord put into effect and His will is enforced even though the created beings do not consent to and the human beings do not satisfy with it.

*You have had an idea about the assassination of ‘Uthman, the general pledge of allegiance to me by all people, and the killing of those who breached their homage to me. So, submit to what people have submitted; otherwise, you know who I am and you know those who are surrounding me.*8

In reply to this letter, Mu’awiyah sent a blank sheet on which he wrote nothing but the exordial statement of **‘In the Name of Allah the All- beneficent, the All-merciful.’**

Imam Ali (‘a) understood from this letter that Mu’awiyah was determined to fight him.

Through Jarir ibn Abdullah Al-Bajali, Imam Ali (‘a) sent the following letter to Mu’awiyah:

The pledge of allegiance to me that took place in Al-Madinah keeps you under obligation even if you are in Syrian. This is so because those who swore allegiance to Abu-Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthman have sworn allegiance to me on the same basis on which they swore allegiance to them. On this basis, he who was present has no choice to consider, and he who was absent has no right to reject; and consultation is confined to the Muhajirun and the Ansar.

If they agree on a certain person and take him to be the caliph, it will be deemed to mean Allah’s pleasure. If any one keeps away by way of objec-

tion or innovation, they will return him to the position from where he kept away. If he refuses, they will fight him for following a course other than that of the believers and Allah will put him back from where he had run away and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort.[9]

Talhah and Al-Zubayr had pledged allegiance to me before they breached their allegiance. So, their breach was like their apostasy. I therefore fought them because of that until the truth came and the commandment of Allah manifested itself although they were averse from it.

Now, you must agree to that to which all people have agreed, for the most desirable thing to me about you is that you will gain security unless you expose yourself to tribulation. If you do, I will fight and seek Allah's help against you. You have spoken too much about the assassinators of 'Uthman; so, resign yourself to what the people have accepted.

Then, you can sue the assassinators of 'Uthman and I will judge between you according to (the laws of) the Book of Allah. However, as for that thing, which you try to gain (i.e. caliphate), it is only like playing trickery on a child to avert him from milk.

By my life, if you see with your brain without any passion, you will find me the most innocent of all of the people of Quraysh in respect of shedding 'Uthman's blood. I have sent to you Jarir ibn Abdullah Al-Bajali, one of the people of true faith and one of those who migrated for the sake of Islam, to take your pledge of allegiance to me. So, swear allegiance to me.
There is no might and no power save with Allah. [10]

Having received this letter, Mu'awiyah tried to postpone his reply until Jarir became bored with the situation. He said to Mu'awiyah, 'Listen, Mu'awiyah! A hypocrite delays performing a prayer until he finds that there is no other way. I do not think that you will swear allegiance until you find that there is no other way left for you.'

Mu'awiyah answered, 'In fact, this is not 'playing trickery on a child to avert him from milk;' rather, it is an issue of many future

dimensions.'

Mu'awiyah then recited before Jarir some poetic verses to make him understand that he was determined to fight Imam Ali ('a), because the people of Syria were obeying him completely.

Finally, Mu'awiyah decided to write back to Imam Ali ('a), including his letter with worthless sophisms and declaring his rebel and insistence on fighting against the Imam ('a). He sealed his letter with some poetic verses revealing animosity between the people of Iraq and the people of Syria. 11

When he received Mu'awiyah's letter, Imam Ali ('a) decided to write him back another one, which was as follows:

From Ali ibn Abi Talib,

To Mu'awiyah ibn Sakhr:

I have received your letter, which is suggestive of a character of a person who lacks any discernment that may lead him to the true guidance and has no leader that may direct him correctly. When fancy called at him, he responded, and when it was in the lead of him, he followed. You have claimed that what prevented you from swearing allegiance to me was the breach of my covenant with 'Uthman!

By my life, I, in this issue, was not different from any other man from the Muhajirun; I entered where they entered and came out wherefrom they came out. Allah will never gather them on a deviational matter and will never strike them with blindness. Furthermore, I have not ordered of killing 'Uthman so that the sin of this order might chase me, nor have I killed him with my own hands so that I might fear for myself the reTalibation of killing.

You claim that the people of Syria are rulers over the people of Al-Hijaz! Can you bring me one Qurayshite man from Syria whose opinion can be admitted by the people of consultation or can be accepted as caliph? If you mention the name of anyone, then you will be belied by the Muha-

jirun and the Ansar. In turn, we can bring you such a Qurayshite man from Al-Hijaz.

You also claim that I must send to you the assassinators of 'Uthman! What is your role in this issue? The sons of 'Uthman are here and they are worthier than you are of demanding with the killers of 'Uthman. If you then claim that you are more powerful than they are in demanding with 'Uthman's blood, then you may commit to the homage that you are binding to do and then you may sue these people before me.

As for your discrimination between the people of Syria and the people of Al- Basrah and between Talhah and Al-Zubayr and you, I swear it by my life that the matter is the same, because the pledge of allegiance to me was so general that none has the right to reconsider it or to resume the choice of it.

As for my family relationship to the Messenger of Allah (S) and my precedence to Islam, if you had been able to cancel it, you would certainly have done.[12]

Mu'awiyah then sent to Imam Ali ('a) a letter full of lies and hypocrisy, accusing him of dependence upon the people of Al-Hijaz, Iraq, and Egypt and accusing him over again of killing 'Uthman, Talhah, and Al-Zubayr and of displacing 'A'ishah. He then threatened the Imam ('a) with the people of Syria.

In reply to this letter, Imam Ali ('a) wrote back the following:

You should weigh up all affairs according to the criterion of one who considers his own affairs apart from his troops and who avoids saying trivial things. By my life, if I derive my power from the people of Iraq more than I do from Allah and more than my recognition of Him, then he who is so lacks any trust in Allah the All-exalted.

So, talk to yourself confidentially in such a serious way that makes you dispense with trifling, for there is always much space in wording, and one like you will not be excused with regard to that for which real men inspire.

You claim that you and we were one hand! This is true. You and we were such, but there is still a big difference between you and us; when Allah decided that His messenger would be one of us, we believed in him, but you disbelieved.

You also claim that I have killed Talhah and Al-Zubayr! You were absent from this issue and you could not present yourself there. If you were there, you would have familiarity with the case. So, do not intrude in such cases, because you have no justifiable reason to do so.

You then claim that you, leading the Muhajirun, will visit me (in warfare)! In fact, hijrah (migration) stopped on that day when your brother was taken as captive.[13] *So, if you feel some hastiness in yourself, you must then slow down and have a rest! If I overcome you, then it must be that Allah has sent me to punish you.*[14]

Moreover, Imam Ali ('a) sent another letter to Mu'awiyah in which he exhorted and warned him against the chastisement and punishment of Almighty Allah for his rebellion. The letter read as follows:

From the servant of Allah, Ali, the Leader of the Believers,

To Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan:

Verily, this world is an abode of trading, and its profit or loss will be seen in the Hereafter. The true happy is thus the one whose merchandise is the righteous deeds and who sees this world from its own viewpoint and weighs it up according to its own criterion. I only want to exhort you although I have already had familiarity with the unstoppable destiny of you.

However, Allah the All-exalted has put the scholars under the obligation of fulfilling their trusts and giving advice to the aberrant and to the followers of the right guidance. So, fear Allah and do not be of those who do not hope dignity for Allah and those against whom the sentence of chastisement is due, for Allah verily is always on a watchtower and your world will turn away from you and bring upon you nothing but regret.

So, quit error and deviation you are now in, despite your old age and the imminent termination of your lifetime. Today, your manner is just like the manner of a shabby dress that whenever one of its sides is sewn, another side is ripped open.

You have already caused perdition to a big number of people whom you have seduced into your aberrance and cast in the waves of your ocean, exposing them to be covered by utter darkness and collided by spurious matters. Thus, they turned aside from the true path, recoiled on their heels, shrank on their backs, and depended on their ancestries.

Excepted from these are the people of intuition who separated from you, after they had recognized your reality, and who ran hurriedly towards Allah from supporting you, because you had made them ride on untamed animals and diverted from the straight path.

O Mu'awiyah, fear Allah with regard to yourself and pull your leash from the hand of Satan, for this world will in the long run slip away from you while the Hereafter is very nigh.[15]

However, Mu'awiyah did not care for the Imam's advice; rather, he wrote back a letter full of revilement and threat.

Imam Ali ('a) therefore replied to his letter as follows:

The deviational statements you have mentioned in your letter are not unlike what your family members and folks had come with, since their atheism and desire for unachievable things made them begrudge Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his Household, and led them to die the way with which you have already had familiarity.

They could neither defend an inviolable matter nor protect themselves against the befalling of a big misfortune. At these situations, it was I who faced them bravely, suffered the heat of their wars, notched the sharpness of their weapons, and cut off their heads and the heads of the chiefs of deviation; and, Allah willing, I will attach their descendants to them. How miserable the descendants are when they follow their ancestors whose destiny and final abode is Hellfire. [16]

Mu'awiyah replied to the Imam's letter with statements of impudence and threat with the people of Syria.

Imam Ali ('a) thus answered in a letter,

How strange that which I received from you is! How familiar I am with what you are about to pass through! My respite in facing you is only because I am waiting for what you believe to be untrue but I believe to be true. Tomorrow, I see coming that you will clamor because of war just like the clamor of the overburdened camels. You and your followers will then have to call on me to accept as arbitrator the Book that you only revere by your tongues while you disbelieve in it in your hearts. 17

The last statement in Imam Ali's letter carries his prediction that Mu'awiyah and his gang will be defeated in the war and will have no other trick to make than calling on accepting the Holy Quran as arbitrator, although they do not believe in it.

Mu'awiyah sent back a letter to Imam Ali ('a) in which he belittled Imam Ali's prediction and considered it to be one of the fables, accusing the Imam ('a) of leading his followers to the wrong course.18

In reply to Mu'awiyah, Imam Ali ('a) wrote back the following letter:

You and your followers, who are the followers of the accursed Satan, have so many times described the truth as the fables of the ancients, cast it behind your backs, and exerted all of your efforts to extinguish the light of Allah with your hands and mouths. However, Allah will perfect His light, though the unbelievers may be averse.

By my life, the light will be perfect though you may be averse, knowledge will be made prevalent to bring about lowliness to you, and you will be punished for your misdeeds. So, make mischief in your imminently transient world as much as you like, for your wrong will very soon come to an end and your deed will plunge. Then, your destined abode will be

Laza (i.e. the flaming fire), while Allah will not wrong you at all. Verily, your Lord is not in the least unjust to the servants.

You have expatiated upon mentioning 'Uthman lengthily while none killed him but you and none disappointed him save you. You had always awaited the befalling of defeat upon him and you have hoped for bad things to come upon him, for you coveted to attain what you have now shown and what your current deed demonstrates.

I have a great hope for attaching you to him while you will be committing a greater sin and a graver wrongdoing than his. I am the son of Abd Al-Muttalib the owner of the sharpest sword whose grip is still in my hand. You have already known those whom I killed among the heroes of the Banu-'Abd Shams, and the tyrants of Banu-Sahm, Jumah, and Makhzum whose sons were orphaned at my hand and whose women were widowed by me.

I also remind you of what you never forget; remember the day when I killed your brother Hanzalah and pulled him from the leg into the well. On that day too, I took your brother 'Amr as captive and tied his neck to his two legs. When I chased you, you flew farting! Had it not been that I do not follow an absconder, you would certainly have been the third of these two.

I now take an oath before you by Allah; an oath that is applicable and never breakable; if any vicissitude of time gathers you and me face to face, I will make you a parable that will not fall from the tongues of people forever; and I will straighten your own place on you until Allah judges between you and me, and He is the best of all judges.

If Allah prolongs my lifetime, I will rally the detachments of Muslims against you and I will rise up against you with a legion of the Muhajirun and the Ansar. Then, I will not admit any of your excuses or intercession and I will not respond to any of your requests or appeals. You will then have to return to your vacillation, hesitation, and turning right and left.

You have witnessed, perceived, and seen how the clouds of death were poured down on you until you resorted to a Book that your father and you were the first to disbelieve in it and to give the lie to its revelation. However, I had looked fixedly at it and wished that you would only do it (i.e. apostasy from Islam). Yet, what had bygone of these had bygone and your plots in it had gone away.

Now, when this letter reaches your hand, I will march towards you. So, choose for yourself, consider it carefully, and make use of this opportunity. If you keep on transgression, aberrance, and reckless behavior until the servants of Allah will tramp on you, your affairs will be at chaos and a matter that may be accepted from you this day will no longer be admitted in the morrow.

O son of Harb, your importunate dispute-on holding this position-with its real people is in reality foolishness. So, do not let the people of deviation awaken your desire for it and do not let the foolishness of the ignorant ones destroy you. I swear by the One Who grasps Ali's soul in His hand, if only one spark of Dhu'l-Faqar flashes in your face, you will be struck such a strike that you will not recover consciousness up to the day when the trumpet will be blown the blow that you despaired of it just like the unbelievers despaired of those in tombs.[19]

Mu'awiyah replied to Imam Ali's letter with words of threat with war and readiness to fight against the Imam ('a).

In reply, Imam Ali ('a) wrote the following letter:

Your offenses, along with what Allah the All-exalted knows about you, have made Him stop improving your affairs or making your heart respond to the truth.

O son of the accursed Sakhr, [20] *you claim that your clemency is as weighty as mountains and your knowledge is so vast that it can decide between the people of suspicion! In reality, you are rude, hypocrite, hollow-hearted, weak-minded, coward, and vile.*

If you are true in what you have written, although the nephew of Banu-Sahm 21 is helping you write down these lines, then leave people behind you and set up for fighting and ready yourself for receiving blows. You may then save the two parties from fighting. Only then, it will be known which one of us is rusty-hearted and out of sight. I am Abu'l-Hasan who killed your grandfather, brother, and maternal uncle; and you are not far away from them. 22

Before the Imam ('a) marched towards Siffin, Mu'awiyah had written a letter to him, which was carried by Abu-Muslim Al-Khawlani. In this letter, Mu'awiyah had nothing new to add; rather, he referred to the same issue of killing 'Uthman.

Imam Ali ('a), replying to his letter, wrote the following lines to Mu'awiyah:

From the servant of Allah, Ali, the Leader of the Believers,

To Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan:

The brother of the (tribe of) Khawlan has carried for me a letter from you, in which you mention Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his Household, and Allah's bestowals on him with the true guidance and the revelation. All praise be to Allah Who has fulfilled His promise to him, perfected victory to him, given him power on the lands, made him prevail on the people of enmity and hatred from amongst his folks who had jumped on him, detested him, given the lie to him, encountered him with hostility, helped each other to banish him, his companions, and his family members, rallied the Arabs against him, combined their forces to theirs to wage war against him, exerted all their efforts to stand against him, and raised difficulties for him 23 until the truth came and the decree of Allah was made manifest, though they were loath. The people who most rallied others against him were his relatives and the next except those whom Allah has protected.

O son of Hind, 24 time has hidden for us wonders from you! You have started telling us of Allah's trials for us, and His bounties to us through

our Prophet. In this matter, you are like the person who carries dates to Hajar, 25 or who challenges his own master to a duel in archery.

Then, you have mentioned that Allah selected from among the Muslims aides through whom He aided His Prophet. So, their positions with Allah are congruent with their excellent deeds in Islam. You have then claimed that the Caliph was the best of all those in Islam and the most sincere to Allah and to His Prophet, followed by his successor.

By my life, the standing of these two in Islam is great and our misfortune for losing them is in reality a big injury for Islam. May Allah show them mercy and award them the best rewarding.

Then, you have claimed that 'Uthman occupied the third rank in virtue. However, if 'Uthman was good-doer, then Allah will reward him out of His compassion, and if he was wrongdoer, then he will meet a forgiving Lord Who is too great to discard forgiving any sin.

By Allah, when Allah rewards all people according to their virtuous deeds in Islam and their sincerity to Him and to His Prophet, I expect that the share of us-the Ahl Al-Bayt-will be the greatest.

When Muhammad, peace of Allah be upon him and his Household, invited to belief in Allah and to monotheism, we-the Ahl Al-Bayt-were the first to believe and give credence to what he had come with. For many years, none in any quarter of the Arabs worshipped Allah except us. Our people (i.e. the folks of our tribe, Quraysh) then were set to kill our Prophet and eradicate our root. They begot on us all misfortunes and did to us various actions.

They thus prevented us from provisions, withheld water from us, and imposed fear upon us, commissioned emissaries and spies to watch over us, forced us to resort to a rough mountain, kindled the fire of war against us, and concluded an agreement among them that they would not allow us to eat, drink, marry women from them, purchase anything from them, or be secured from their attacks unless we would give up the Prophet, peace of Allah be upon him and his Household, so that they would be able to kill or punish him severely.

We remained unsafe from their evils except for one time a year; that is during the season of pilgrimage. Then, Allah decided for us that we should protect him, defend his yard, fight others in defense of his inviolability, and unsheathe our swords to safeguard him at the hours of nights and days. So, the believer of us did so in desire for winning the reward, and the unbeliever of us also did so; yet, in protection of the root.

As for the people of Quraysh who accepted Islam thereafter, none of them ever suffered any of these tribulations because some of them were protected by the clans they had allied or defended by the clans to which they had belonged. So, none could intercept them the way our people had intercepted us. As a result, they were on a height secured from being killed. Then, what Allah had decided to take place took place.

Then, Allah ordered His Messenger to emigrate after which He permitted him to fight the polytheists. When fighting attained their climax and he (i.e. the Holy Prophet) was challenged, he always submitted his family members to fight and to protect his companions from the heat of spearheads and swords. In consequence, 'Ubaydah was killed on that day of the Battle of Badr, Hamzah on that day of the Battle of Uhud, and Ja'far and Zayd on the day of the Battle of Mu'tah.

By Allah, the one whom I can mention by name if I want (i.e. Ali ibn Abi Talib) wanted martyrdom with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his Household, more than once as same as these persons did, but the termination of their lifetimes was expedited while his death was postponed. Allah is the patron of rewarding them excellently and He is the best to bestow upon them with favors for the righteous deeds they had done.

I have neither heard of nor seen anyone more sincere to Allah with regard to their obedience to His Messenger, more obedient to His Messenger with regard to His obedience to his Lord, or more steadfast against hardships, misfortunes, and in times of conflicts and situations of affliction with the Holy Prophet, may Allah bless him and his Household, than these men whom I have mentioned were. The Muhajirun are also sources of much virtue that we have recognized from them. May Allah reward them for the best of their deeds!

You have also claimed that I was envious to the caliphs, reluctant to respond to them, and oppressive to them. As for oppression, God forbid it!

As for my reluctance and disagreement to their matter (i.e. caliphate), I do not apologize to people about that, because when Allah-may His mention be elevated-grasped the soul of His Prophet, may Allah bless him and his Household, to Him, the people of Quraysh said, 'The leader should be from us.' The Ansar answered, 'Rather, the leader should be from us.'

The people of Quraysh then argued, 'Muhammad the Messenger of Allah, peace of Allah be upon him and his Household, was one of us; therefore, we are worthier of taking his place than you, the Ansar, are.' The Ansar submitted to this fact and acquiesced to the matter that leadership and authority should be for the people of Quraysh.

Now, if the people of Quraysh were more deserving to hold the position of leadership than the Ansar because of Muhammad, peace of Allah be upon him and his Household, then the closest of all people to Muhammad, peace of Allah be upon him and his Household, should be more entitled to this leadership than they were; otherwise, the Ansar had the greatest share of leadership among all of the Arabs.

I now do not know whether my acquaintances confessed that they had seized my entitled right, or the Ansar were wrong in their situation. Rather, I knew for sure that the thing they had taken was my right. Nevertheless, I left it for them. May Allah excuse them!

As for your claim about the case of 'Uthman, my rupture of family relationship with him, and my rallying people against him, 'Uthman had done what you have heard about; therefore, people did what you saw. You certainly know that I had already secluded myself from 'Uthman. If you claim that you did not know this, then you are surely laying the blame unjustly on me. So, accuse me falsely of any matter you wish!

As for your words about the assassinators of 'Uthman, I have investigated the matter so precisely and, as a result, I concluded that I do not have the right to give them up to neither you nor anyone else.

By my life, if you will not retreat your error and mutiny, you will very soon see them go in pursuit of you, and this matter will not require you to chase them in a land, an ocean, a mountain, or a plain.

When people gave Abu-Bakr this position, your father came to me and said, 'You are the most entitled to this position after Muhammad (peace of Allah be upon him and his Household) and I am ready to be the chief of this matter against those who have opposed you. So, stretch out your hand so that I will pay homage to you.' However, I did not.

Now, you know that your father wanted this matter and offered it to me, but I refused, because the people were not far away enough from disbelief. I thus anticipated disunity among Muslims. So, your father was more enthusiastic about my holding this position than I was. If you now recognize my right in the same way as your father did, then you will hit the point of truth, but if you do not, then Allah will make me dispense with you. 26

Mu'awiyah sent another letter with Abu-Umamah Al-Bahili. As usual, he filled in this letter with fallacies, forgeries, and untruths.

In reply, Imam Ali ('a) wrote the following letter:

Now, your letter has reached me wherein you recall that Allah chose Muhammad, peace of Allah be upon him and his Household, for His religion and helped him through those companions who supported him. Strange things about you have remained concealed (by the irony of fate) from us, since you have started telling us of Allah's trials for us and His bounties to us through our Prophet. In this matter, you are like the person who carries dates to Hajar or who challenges his own master to a duel in archery.

You think that so-and-so and so-and-so 27 *are the most distinguished persons in Islam. You have said such a thing which if it be true, you have nothing to do with it, but if it be not so, then its defect will not affect you. What are you to do with the question of who is better and who is worse, or who is the ruler and who is the ruled?*

What have the Released Ones and their sons to do with distinguishing between the first Muhajirun and determining their position or defining their ranks? What a pity! The sound of an arrow is being produced by what is not a real arrow, and he against whom the judgment is to be passed is sitting in judgment. O man!

Why do you not see your own lameness and remain within bounds? Why do you not realize the shortness of your measure and stay back where destiny has placed you? You have no concern with the defeat of the defeated or the victory of the victor.

You are wandering in bewilderment and straying from the right path. Do you not realize it? I am not giving you any news: I am just recounting Allah's bounty, namely that a number of people from among the Muhajirun and the Ansar fell as martyrs in the way of Allah the Sublime, and that each of them is distinguished (on that account), but when one of us secured martyrdom, he was named the chief of all martyrs, 28 and the Messenger of Allah, peace of Allah be upon him and his Household, gave him the peculiar honor of repeating seventy times the statement of allahu- akbar(Allah is the Most Great) during his funeral prayer.

Do you not know that a number of people lost their hands in the way of Allah, and that everyone is distinguished (on that account), but when the same thing occurred to one of us, he was given the name: theflier in Paradise and: the two-winged. 29 If Allah had not forbidden self-praise, the writer would have mentioned numerous distinctions, which the believer knows well and which the ears of hearers do not wish to forget.

Better, leave those whose arrows miss the mark. We are the direct recipients of our Lord's favors while others receive favors from us after that. In spite of our old established honor and our well-known superiority over your people, we did not stay away from mixing with you and married and got married (among you) like equals although you were not so.

And how could you be so when (the position is that) among us is the Prophet while among you is the belier, 30 among us is the lion of Allah while among you is the lion of the opposing groups, 31 among us are the two masters of the youths of Paradise 32 while among you are the chil-

dren of Hell, 33 among us is the choicest of all the women of the worlds 34 while among you is the bearer of firewood, 35 and many more distinctions on our side and shortcomings on your side?

Our Islam is well-known and our (greatness in the) pre-Islamic period too cannot be denied. Whatever remains has been mentioned in the words of Allah the Glorified and Sublime:

'And blood relations have the better claim in respect of one to the other, according to the Book of Allah. (33:6)'

He (Allah) the Sublime also says:

'Verily, of men the nearest to Abraham are surely those who followed him and this (Our) Prophet (Muhammad) and those who believe; and verily, Allah is the Guardian of the faithful. (3:68)'

Thus, we are superior firstly because of kinship and secondly because of obedience. When, under the shed (Saqifah of Banu-Sa'idah), the Muhajirun contended kinship with the Messenger of Allah, peace of Allah be upon him and his Household, against the Ansar, they scored over them. If that success were based on kinship, then the right would be ours better than yours. Otherwise, the Ansar's contention stands.

You think that I have been jealous of the caliphs, and I have revolted against them. Even if this were so, it is not an offense against you and therefore no explanation is due to you. 'This is a matter for which no blame comes to you.'

You have said that I was dragged like a camel with a nose string to swear allegiance (to Abu-Bakr). By the Eternal Allah, you had intended to revile me but you have praised me, and to humiliate me but have yourself been humiliated. What humiliation does it mean for a Muslim to be the victim of oppression so long as he does not entertain any doubt in his religion nor any misgiving in his firm belief! This argument of mine is intended for others, but I have stated it to you only in so far as it was appropriate.

Then you have recalled my position vis-a-vis 'Uthman; and in this matter, an answer is due to you because of your kinship with him. So (now tell me), which of us was more inimical towards 'Uthman and who did more to bring about his killing; or who offered him his support but he made him sit down and stopped him; or who was he whom he called for help but who turned his face from him and drew his death near him until ill his fate overtook him? No, no; by Allah:

"Indeed knows Allah those who hinder others among you and those who say unto their brethren, 'Come here unto us!' And they come not to fight but a little." (33:18)

I am not going to offer my excuse for reproving him for some of his innovations, for if my good counsel and guidance to him was a sin, then very often a person who is blamed has no sin and sometimes the only reward a counselor [36] *reaps is suspicion of evil. I desired naught but reform what I am able to do; and my guidance is not but with Allah. On Him alone do I rely and unto Him alone do I turn.*

You have mentioned that for me and for my followers, you have only the sword. This makes even a weeping person laugh. Did you ever see the descendants of Abd Al-Muttalib running away from battle, or being frightened by swords?

'Wait a little until Hamal joins the battle.'

Shortly, he whom you are seeking will seek you and he whom you think to be far away will approach near you. I am shortly speeding towards you with a force of the Muhajirun, the Ansar, and those who follow them in virtue. Their number will be great and their dust will spread all round.

They will be wearing their shrouds and their most coveted desire is to meet Allah. They will be accompanied by the descendants of those who took part in the Battle of Badr, and they will have Hashimite swords whose cuttings you have already seen in the case of your brother, maternal uncle, your grandfather, and your kinsmen. Nor are they far distant from the unjust ones. [37]

Preparations For The War

All means that Imam Ali (‘a) used for preventing bloodshed and uniting the Muslims fell short, because Mu’awiyah had already decided to revolt against Imam Ali’s government and declare mutiny and armed disobedience. He had put two conditions:

(1) The Imam must hand the assassinators of ‘Uthman over to him so that he would reTalibate over them, and

(2) The Imam’s government must be disbanded and the issue of caliphate must be subjected to the consultation system so that Muslims would select someone as their leader.

In fact, Mu’awiyah put these two impossible conditions so that he would wage war against the Imam (‘a).

Thus, the two parties prepared against each other all possible equipments and weapons.

Imam Ali’s Correspondences With His Deputy Governors

Imam Ali (‘a) sent some letters to his deputy governors calling them to support and join him in this war against the enemy who had opposed the unanimity of Muslims and gone against the legal ruler.

To Mikhnaf ibn Qays, the deputy governor of Isfahan and Hamadan, Imam Ali (‘a) sent this letter:

To struggle against one who has turned away from the truth deliberately and chosen the stupor of blindness and deviation willingly is a duty incumbent upon the people of true recognition.

Verily, Allah is pleased with whoever pleases Him, but wrathful with whoever acts disobediently towards Him. We are now determined to march towards these people who have acted towards the servants of Allah in a way contradictory to what Allah has revealed. They have also misappropriated the spoils, dispensed with the religious punishments, muffled the right, made corruption prevail on the earth, and taken as adherents the sinful people rather than the faithful believers.

If a saint of Allah deemed horrible their misdeeds, they would hate, eliminate, and deprive him of his rights. If, on the other hand, a wrongdoer helped them proceed in their offenses, they would love, draw near, and treated him kindly. Thus have they insisted on wrongdoing and agreed commonly on violation. In fact, they had very often deterred people from following the truth, helped each other in committing sins, and acted wrongly.

Once you receive this letter of mine, you may commission the most trustful person in your view to replace you in carrying out your jobs and come to us, perchance you, along with us, will face this violating enemy and you will then enjoin the right, forbid the wrong, agree with the rightful, and oppose the wrongful. In fact, we cannot dispense with you and you must not dispense with the reward for jihad. Allah is sufficient to us and He is the most excellent Protector.

Mikhnaf thus appointed Al-Harth ibn Abi'l-Harth ibn Al-Rabi' as his representative on Isfahan and Sa'id ibn Wahab on Hamadan, and he came hurriedly to join Imam Ali ('a) in the Battle of Siffin.[38]

Imam Ali ('a) wrote another letter to the commanders-in-chief of the army, asking them to support him in this conflict:

I release myself before you all from the errors of your soldiers; so, spare people from wrongdoing and transgression, impose restrictions on the foolish ones among you, and beware lest you commit things due to which Allah will not admit our and your prayers, for He the All-exalted says, 'My Lord would not care for you were it not for your prayer.' Verily, if

Allah the All-exalted detests some people in the heavens, they will perish on the earth.

Do not fall short of doing kind acts, do not make your soldiers stop acting in the best way, do not prevent the subjects from your help, and do not fall short of strengthening the religion of Allah. Strive earnestly for the sake of Allah according to the manner you are obliged to do, for Allah the All-glorified has made it obligatory upon you and us to thank Him practically through our efforts and to support Him with the utmost of our strengths. There is no might and no power except with Allah the All-high and All-great. 39

Imam Ali ('a) wrote a third letter to the people of Quraysh, including Mu'awiyah, calling them to stop bloodshed and agree on one word. He thus wrote to them the following lines:

Peace be upon you. I praise Allah save Whom there is no god. Verily, Allah the All-exalted has some servants who believed in the revelation, recognized the interpretation (of the revelations), and understood the religious questions; and Allah has demonstrated their virtue in the Wise Quran.

In the meantime, you were the enemies of Allah's Messenger; you gave the lie to the Book and agreed unanimously on waging war against the Muslims. You used to detain, torture, or kill any Muslim you would chance upon. When Allah decided to give dominance to His religion and make it manifestly prevalent, the Arabs started converting to this religion in big groups and this community surrendered to it willingly or unwillingly.

You were among those who embraced this religion either desirably or because you feared the otherwise, whereas the people of precedence had won due to their precedence and the Muhajirun due to their virtue. It is not proper that one who does not have the like of these unprecedented acts in the religion and the like of their virtues in Islam to dispute with them on the matter that they only deserve it; otherwise, that one will be sinful and wrongdoer.

One endued with insight ought not to ignore his actual worth, overstep his actual bound, and exhaust himself by seeking for what he is not competent enough to have. Verily, the worthiest of running the affairs of this community have always been the closest to the Messenger, the most knowledgeable with the Book, the most versed in the religious questions, the foremost to embracing Islam, the best in jihad, and the most powerful to manage the affairs of this community with regard to its leaders.

So, fear Allah to Whom you shall be returned and do not mix up the truth with the falsehood nor hide the truth while you know it.Be it known to all of you that the most virtuous servants of Allah are those who act upon what they know, while the wickedest are the ignorant ones who dispute with the people of knowledge on the strength of their ignorance.

Verily, a knowledgeable one has superiority due to his knowledge while an ignorant who disputes with the knowledgeable increases nothing but more ignorance. Behold! I now call you to follow the Book of Allah and the practice of His Prophet, and to spare this community from bloodshed.

If you accept, you will have then been in the right and you will have been guided to your fortuity, but if you insist on sowing disunity among Muslims and stirring up discord among the people of this community, then you will increase nothing but aloofness from Allah and the Lord will increase nothing but wrath with you. 40

When this letter reached his hand, Mu'awiyah answered back with a letter that contained one poetic verse, involving that nothing but fighting and beheading would Imam Ali ('a) have from him (i.e. Mu'awiyah).

When the Imam ('a) read Mu'awiyah's reply, he recited this holy Quranic verse:

Surely, you cannot guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He pleases; and He knows best the followers of the right way. (28:56)

Having gained all means of waging war against Imam Ali (‘a), Mu’awiyah, due to his cunning and evil schemes, could persuade the people of Syria into this war. He used to raise the blood-stained shirt of ‘Uthman to deceive people that Imam Ali (‘a) had killed ‘Uthman and the people of Syria would then raise their voices with weeping and cries.

When these cries would calm down, ‘Amr, in a sarcastic manner, would say to Mu’awiyah, ‘Shake its baby before its eyes so that it would show sympathy!’ Then, Mu’awiyah would raise ‘Uthman’s shirt so that people would start a new wave of weeping.

These people were so fooled that they swore not to let water touch their bodies and women come near them before they would kill the assassinators of ‘Uthman. 41 It is historically known that the people of Syria, unlike the people of Iraq, were extremely obedient to and humble before any one who would assume their leadership.42

Leading such naive people, Mu’awiyah marched for waging war against Imam Ali (‘a). He made them reside in a place called Siffin, which was very close to the River Euphrates and ordered a brigade to occupy the entire river. Thousands of soldiers surrounded the two banks of the river, considering this process to be the first sign of victory, because they would prevent their enemy from having water.

On the other front, Imam Ali (‘a), having despaired of any peaceful solution, had to prepare his soldiers and himself for encountering the enemy. Preachers thus started encouraging people on participating in this war and on jihad, especially that they had recently achieved victory in the Battle of the Camel.

Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) also delivered an enthusiastic speech in which he could flare up the emotions through statements of invitation to jihad and standing in the face of the enemies who had plotted evil schemes against Islam and Muslims. The masses re-

sponded to Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) and set out with him to fight the transgressing party.

Imam Ali (‘a) ordered the vanguards to start moving forward and to keep close to the River Euphrates until they would receive further command. He also ordered them not to start fighting until he would join them.

When the army of Imam Ali (‘a) arrived in Siffin, the soldiers could not find any spring from which they would supply themselves with water, because all sources of water had been already occupied by Mu’awiyah’s troops who would never allow them even a single drop of water. As a consequence, Imam Ali (‘a) delegated some of his companions to Mu’awiyah, asking him to evacuate a place from which his soldiers would supply themselves with water.

When Mu’awiyah presented the request before some of his retinue, they refused and claimed that they would deprive the Imam’s army of water as same as they did with ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan. The Imam’s delegation returned unsuccessful and informed the Imam (‘a) about the insistence of the Syrians on preventing them from water.

When thirst attacked the Imam’s army heavily, Al-Ash’ath ibn Qays advanced to the Imam (‘a) and asked him permission to fight against the enemies so that he would force them away from the sources of water. The Imam (‘a) had no other solution than responding to Al-Ash’ath’s request. Al-Ash’ath then went out, shouting, ‘Whoever wants water or death must meet me the next morning, for I am determined to fetch water.’ Twelve thousand persons responded to Al-Ash’ath’s call.

The next morning, Al-Ash’ath, leading these men who carried their swords on their shoulders, advanced towards the army of Mu’awiyah. When the two armies were face to face, Al-Ash’ath introduced himself to Mu’awiyah’s troops and shouted, ‘Leave your sites near the source of water.’ Abu’l-A’war Al-Sulmi, from

Mu'awiyah's army, replied, 'By Allah, you will never drink from the water before swords overtake us and you.'

Imam Ali ('a) had ordered Malik Al-Ashtar to support Al-Ash'ath; he therefore ordered his horsemen to attack Mu'awiyah's troops causing them heavy losses and forcing them to abscond, followed by disgrace.43

When the troops of Imam Ali ('a) had full control over the sources of water, some of them suggested to the Imam ('a) that they would prevent Mu'awiyah's troops from water and to return like for like. However, Imam Ali ('a) refused this suggestion and ordered his soldiers to allow the enemy to supply themselves with water. Of course, such honorable and noble traits cannot be found with Mu'awiyah and his likes.

A man from Syria came to Imam Ali ('a) in Siffin and asked, 'O Amir Al- Mu'minin, please inform me if our going to fight against the Syrians destined by Allah.'

The Imam ('a) answered,

O Syrian brother, yes it is. I swear by Him Who has split the grain and created the souls, whatever a valley we cross or a height we climb is by the predetermination and act of Allah.

The Syrian man said, 'Then, I must relegate all my sufferings in this march to Allah. I do not believe that I will deserve any reward for my efforts, since all of them have been already predetermined and decided by Allah.'

Explaining the idea, Imam Ali ('a) said,

Why is that? Almighty Allah will grant you abundant reward for climbing any height and will grant you abundant reward for coming down, as long as you have not been compelled to do so nor have been obliged to do it.

The Syrian man asked, 'How can it be, when the predetermined destiny is driving us to do whatever we do?'

Imam Ali ('a), giving further explanation, said,

O Syrian brother, you seem to have taken it as a final and unavoidable destiny according to which we are bound to act! If it were so, there would be no question of reward or chastisement and there would be no sense in Allah's promises, warnings, obligations, and prohibitions.

It would not be that the good-doer is worthier of receiving the reward of good deeds than the evil doer or the evil doer worthier of being sentenced to the punishments of evil doing than the good-doer. This is the statement of the idol-worshippers, the party of Satan, the rivals of the All-beneficent Lord, the abjurers, the faTalibsts and magi of this nation.

Allah the All-exalted has ordered His creatures to act by free will, cautioned them, and prohibited them against evil doings. He has placed easy obligations on them and has not put heavy obligations. He gives them much reward in return for little action. He is disobeyed, not because He is overpowered.

He is obeyed but not under force. He has not sent prophets just for fun. He has not sent down the Book for the people without purpose. He did not create the skies, the earth, and all that is in between them in vain. That is the imagination of those who disbelieve; then woe to those who disbelieve because of the fire.

The Syrian asked, 'Then, what is the predetermination and act of Allah due to which we have taken this course?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

The measurement and decision in such matters are relegated to Allah alone. 'And the command of Allah is a decree that is made absolute.'

Having been convinced by the explanations of the Imam ('a), the Syrian man expressed, 'You have relieved a big concern of mine. May Allah relieve all your concerns!'

Couriers Of Peace

Trying all means of peace possible, Imam Ali (‘a) sent a number of his companions to Mu’awiyah to call him for preventing bloodshed and to warn against the bad consequences of any military conflict.

First of all, Imam Ali (‘a) sent the prominent Companion, ‘Adi ibn Hatam, who said to Mu’awiyah, ‘We have come to you to invite you for a solution by which Allah may unite our word and community and spare the lives of Muslims. We thus call you to respond to the one who was the foremost to accept Islam and the owner of the best deeds. Having been guided by Almighty Allah to the truth, all people agreed unanimously on choosing him (i.e. Imam Ali) as their leader, and none remained except your acquaintances and you.
So, O Mu’awiyah, accept his leadership before Allah inflicts upon your followers and you what he had inflicted upon those who opposed him in the Battle of the Camel.’

Mu’awiyah did not respond to ‘Adi’s call; rather, he insisted on mutiny and war.

Yazid ibn Qays Al-Arhabi and Shabath ibn Rab’i said similar words to Mu’awiyah, but he insisted on his situation.[44]

Imam Ali (‘a) then had no other means than engaging in that war. He therefore instructed his army, saying,

Do not fight them unless they initiate the fighting, because, by the grace of Allah, you are in the right and to leave them until they begin fighting will be another point from your side against them. If, by the will of Allah, the enemy is defeated, then do not kill the runner away, do not strike a helpless person, do not finish off the wounded, and do not inflict pain on women even though they may attack your honor with filthy words and abuse your officers, because they are weak in character, mind, and intelligence.

We have been ordered to desist from them although they may be unbelievers. Even in the pre-Islamic era, if a man struck a woman with a stone or a stick, he was rebuked along with his posteriors after him.[45]

The Imam (‘a) then had a look at the Muslim armies with deep sadness, because they had been prepared to face one another. He thus uttered these supplicatory words, praying to Almighty Allah to keep his army away from arrogance and sedition. He thus said,

O Allah, O Lord of this canopy that is raised high, bordered, and safeguarded; which You have decided to be the cause of the darkness of night and the light of the day, and You have made it the source of the course of the sun and the moon and the mansions of the planets and starts, and You have made groups of angels, who never become bored of worshipping You, inhabit there!

O Lord of the earth that You have made resting-place for people, beasts, and pests as well as what we know and what we do not know, and what we can see and what we cannot see from your great creation!

O Lord of the mountains that You have made act as projections for the earth and as abode for the creatures!
O Lord of the ocean that is filled with swell and is surrounding the world!
O Lord of the clouds that are made subservient between the heaven and the earth!

O Lord of the ships that run upon the sea with that which is of use to men; please, if You grant us victory over our enemy, then keep us away from pride and direct us towards the true guidance. If you grant them victory over us, then please endue us with martyrdom and safeguard the rest of my followers from falling into seditious matters.[46]

The Encounter

Preparing himself for the war, Imam Ali (‘a) put on the war uniform and went out to the battlefield. Abdullah ibn Badil Al-

Khuza'i was the commander of the right wing and Abdullah ibn 'Abbas the commander of the left wing of the army, which also contained such prominent persons like 'Ammar ibn Yasir and his likes.

Encountered by the armies of Syria, the army of the Imam ('a) engaged in an intense fighting and the people of Iraq did very well, implanting horror and fear in the hearts of Mu'awiyah's army. This conflict lasted for a long time and did not stop before the beginning of the sacred month of Muharram.

Mu'awiyah ordered his commanders and horsemen to kill Imam Ali ('a). He thus asked, ''Ali will advance within the horsemen. Which one of you can encounter and kill him?' Some people advanced to do the mission, but Mu'awiyah agreed upon 'Amr ibn Al-Husayn Al-Sakuni.

As usual, Imam Ali ('a) was in the center of the battlefield when Al-Sakuni waylaid him. When he was about to stab the Imam from the rear, Sa'id ibn Qays Al-Hamdani intercepted and could stab him to death. This incident aggrieved Mu'awiyah very much.

When the sacred month of Muharram elapsed, military processions were resumed, yet interruptedly. The two armies were fed up with such episodic raids; they therefore asked for a general encounter. So, the two armies were mobilized for a general encounter and they were then engaged in such a horrible fighting that caused numerous casualties and great fatigue.

The right wing of the Imam's army was about to be stricken by the enemies, but Imam Ali ('a) and his two sons Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn fought so bravely that they could control the situation.47

Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of Malik Al-Ashtar, the two wings of the Imam's army held together and fought violently against the enemies.

Imam Ali (‘a) then stood in the middle of the battlefield and raised his voice with a call on Mu’awiyah. However, Mu’awiyah was too coward to answer the Imam (‘a); he therefore asked his companions to see what the Imam (‘a) wanted from him.

The Imam (‘a) said, ‘I want him to come out and listen to one word from me.’
Mu’awiyah had to appear before the Imam (‘a), but he and ‘Amr ibn Al-’As were in the middle of many soldiers when they faced the Imam (‘a), who thus said,

Woe to you! What for are these peoples killing and striking one another? Encounter me man to man! Whoever kills the other will be considered the triumphant and will hold leadership.

Mu’awiyah consulted ‘Amr, and the latter said, ‘This is fair!’

This word angered Mu’awiyah so intensely that he answered ‘Amr, saying, ‘I cannot be cheated by such words. By Allah, the son of Abu Talib has wetted the ground with the blood of whomever had the courage to encounter him.’

When Mu’awiyah accused ‘Amr of trying to send him to death, ‘Amr answered, ‘Mu’awiyah, you are too coward to compete in a contest with your rival; so, you should not doubt the advice I have given you!’

One day of the war, ‘Amr ibn Al-’As was in the battlefield when Imam Ali (‘a), having recognized him, followed him. However, ‘Amr could not have any means to save himself from the Imam’s sword except exposing his anus so that the Imam (‘a) would leave him. So, the Imam (‘a), because of his high moral standards and shyness left ‘Amr. When he went back, Mu’awiyah said to ‘Amr, ‘You should thank Allah and your anus!’[48]

The same act was done by Busr ibn Arta'ah when Imam Ali (‘a) was about to kill him. Thus are the politicians of the Umayyad dynasty!

On another day of the Battle of Siffin, ‘Ammar ibn Yasir, who was about ninety years old, woke up earlier than usual and asked Imam Ali (‘a) to permit him to go to the battlefield. The Imam (‘a) did not permit him, but ‘Ammar insisted and showed that he was eager to meet the Holy Prophet (S); so, the Imam (‘a) had to give him permission.

‘Ammar fought so bravely that Mu’awiyah encouraged his army to encounter ‘Ammar. One of the filthy soldiers of Mu’awiyah; namely, Abu’l-’Adiyah, attacked ‘Ammar and stabbed him so heavily that he fell to the ground.

Bleeding and in the last sparks of life, ‘Ammar asked for a drink; and a woman fetched him a cup of milk. When he saw the cup, ‘Ammar smiled and said, ‘The Messenger of Allah told me that the last drink I would have in this world would be a cup of milk. He (S) also told me that I would be killed by the transgressing party.’

Before long, ‘Ammar departed from this world as martyr.

Imam Ali (‘a) threw himself on ‘Ammar’s dead body and kissed it very much. He then said,

Indeed, on the wrong way is he who does not deem serious the killing of ‘Ammar and who does not consider this to be a painful misfortune. May Allah show ‘Ammar mercy on the day when he embraced Islam! May Allah show ‘Ammar mercy on the day when he was killed! May Allah show ‘Ammar mercy on the day when he will be resurrected and raised from the dead!

Whenever four persons from the companions of Allah’s Messenger would be mentioned, ‘Ammar would certainly be the fourth; and whenever five persons from them would be mentioned, ‘Ammar would certainly be the fifth. None of the companions of Allah’s Messenger has ever doubted the fact that ‘Ammar deserved Paradise for more than one *situation of him. Congratulations to ‘Ammar, for he has won Paradise.*[49]

When the news of ‘Ammar’s martyrdom was circulated among the troops of Mu’awiyah’s army, they were shocked, because they have heard about the Holy Prophet’s prediction that ‘Ammar would be killed by the transgressing party. Besides, this Prophetic tradition was reported by ‘Amr ibn Al-’As himself. Therefore, some soldiers withdrew the battle.

Mu’awiyah thus reproached ‘Amr, saying, ‘You have spoiled the people of Syria! You should not have reported whatever you had heard from Allah’s Messenger.’

‘Amr answered, ‘Should I have known the future? I reported this tradition when I did not know that the battle of Siffin would take place.’

To amend the situation, ‘Amr, due to his cunning and deceptive means, misled the troops of Mu’awiyah, saying, ‘The killer of ‘Ammar must be the one who had allowed him to come to the battlefield!’

Unfortunately, these words deceived the feeble-minded soldiers of Mu’awiyah.

When Imam Ali (‘a) learnt about this, he said,

According to this criterion, it must be that Allah’s Messenger was the one who killed Hamzah and Ja’far, because he sent them to the battlefield!

The Night Of The Growl

The most violent encounter in the Battle of Siffin is known as laylat Al-harir, because the two armies issued sounds like growling. At this night, the two armies advanced towards each other and shot each other with arrows and stones until they expired. They then stabbed each other with spears until they broke into pieces.

They then faced each other with swords and iron instruments and no sound could be heard at that night except the sound of iron. The encounter lasted for about twenty-four hours during which about seventy thousand persons from the two armies were killed. As a result, the military forces of Mu'awiyah's army were crashed so violently that Mu'awiyah himself was about to run away.

Imam Ali ('a) then delivered this speech to his army:

O people, the matter with your enemy and you has attained a climax that you are witnessing. None of them remained except the last breaths. When matters become in the benefit of some people, their final results must be assessed to their starting points. These people have stood up against you although they follow no true faith; therefore, we could do to them what we did. This morning, I will attack them to execute the laws of Allah the Almighty and All-exalted on them.[50]

The battle was resumed and the army of Imam Ali ('a) was very close to achieving the final victory.

The Farce Of Raising The Quranic Copies

Having seen the imminent defeat of his army, Mu'awiyah ran towards 'Amr ibn Al-'As and sought his advice. 'Amr thus suggested, 'Your men will not be able to face Ali's men nor are you like him; he is fighting for something and you are fighting for something else. You want to survive this battle, but it does not matter for him if he loses his life for achieving his goal.

The people of Iraq will fight lest you overcome them, but the people of Syria are not fearful if Ali overcomes you. However, you must face them with a matter that will create discrepancy among them whether they accept or refuse it. You must call them to the Book of Allah to be the arbitrator among them and you. If you do

it, you will attain your aim. In fact, I have already had this idea in my mind, but I postponed it to the time of urgency.'

This wicked idea was received by Mu'awiyah gladly; therefore, he ordered his soldiers to raise copies of the Holy Quran before the soldiers of Imam Ali ('a). As a result, about five hundred copies were raised on the spearheads and the people of Syria shouted in one voice,

'O people of Iraq, this Book of Allah must be the arbitrator between you and us. Who will protect the borders of Syria if its people will be killed in this battle? And who will protect the borders of Iraq if its people will be killed? Who will then protect the Muslims against the Romans, the Turks, and the atheists?'

This trick worked with the soldiers of Imam Ali ('a) who were turned upside and down. However, the Imam ('a) had nothing to say but to express his deep grief. He did not stop bewaring his soldiers of the tricks of Mu'awiyah, but he received no response.

About twenty thousand soldiers, headed by Mis'ar ibn Fadaki, Zayd ibn Husayn, and other famous personalities, came to the Imam ('a) and called him by name, saying, 'O Ali, respond to the call of these people and accept the Book of Allah as the arbitrator. If you do it not, we will surely kill you in the same was as we did with 'Uthman ibn 'Affan.'

Grief-stricken, the Imam ('a) answered,

Behold! I was the first to call for the Book of Allah and the first to respond to it. I am neither allowed nor permitted according to my faith to refuse any invitation to the Book of Allah. I have fought against these people only because I wanted them to submit to the judgment of the Quran, after they had disobeyed the order of Allah, broken their covenants to Him, and abandoned His Book. Now, I tell you that these people are playing trickery on you and they have nothing to do with the acting upon the Quran.[51]

Unfortunately, the Imam's soldiers did not respond to him; rather, they raised their voices in is face, demanding him to respond to Mu'awiyah's troops and threatening him with death.

Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays, who had good connections with 'Amr ibn Al-'As, was the most vehement in calling for the so-called arbitration of the Holy Quran and the response to the invitation of the people of Syria.

Having had no other solution, the Imam ('a) had to issue his orders of ceasing the military processes, although this matter caused him great sadness, because it was the first step towards the devastation of the government of the truth and the victory of the wrong powers. He also felt that the blood that was shed in this battle had gone to no avail.

The mutinous people also insisted on the Imam ('a) to order Malik Al-Ashtar to withdraw although what lied between Malik and final victory was no more than a few steps.

Having been coerced to do so, Imam Ali ('a) sent Yazid ibn Hani' to call Malik back. When Malik heard this order, he was bewildered; he thus said, 'Please, tell him that this is not the occasion to leave the position. He may wait a bit then I will come to his audience with the tidings of victory.'

Hani' conveyed this message on return, but people shouted that Imam Ali ('a) must have sent word to him secretly to continue. The Imam ('a) said that he never got any occasion to send any secret message to him. Whatever he said was said before them. People said that he should be sent again and that if Malik delayed his return, the Imam ('a) should forsake his life.

The Imam ('a) again sent Yazid ibn Hani' and sent word that rebellion had occurred, he should return in whatever condition he was. So, Hani' went and said to Malik, 'You hold victory dear or the life of Imam Ali? If his life is dearer to you, you should now raise hands off the battle and go to him.'

Leaving the chances of victory, Malik stood up and came to these mutinous people with grief and disappointment. Chaos raged there. He rebuked them very much, but matters had taken such a turn that could not be corrected.

Malik then asked Imam Ali (‘a) to wage war against these mutinous people, but the Imam (‘a) refused, because they were the overwhelming majority; and if he would do so, they would be preyed on by the troops of Mu’awiyah.

The Imam (‘a) then nodded his head down with grief and did not say a single word to these people, but they started shouting, ‘’Ali has accepted the arbitration of the Quran!’

The Imam (‘a), having predicted the future, said,

O people, matters between you and me went as I wished until war exhausted you. By Allah, it has overtaken some of you and left others, and has completely weakened your enemy. Until yesterday, I was giving orders, but today I am being given orders, and until yesterday I was dissuading people (from wrong acts), but today I am being dissuaded. You have now shown liking to live in this world, and it is not for me to bring you to what you dislike.[52]

The Arbitration

When the surviving forces of the Syrians lost ground and were ready to run away from the field, Mu’awiyah changed the whole phase of the battle by using the Quran as his instrument of strategy, and succeeded in creating such a division among the Iraqis that, despite Imam Ali’s efforts at counseling, they were not prepared to take any forward step, but insisted on stopping the war, whereupon Imam Ali (‘a) too had to agree to arbitration.

Among these people, some had actually been duped and they believed that they were being asked to abide by the Holy Quran but there were others who had become weary of the long period of

war and had lost courage. Then, people seized a good opportunity to stop the war, and so they cried hoarse for its postponement.

There were others who had accompanied Imam Ali (‘a) because of his temporal authority but did not support him by heart, nor did they aim at victory for him. There were some people who had expectations with Mu’awiyah, and had started attaching hopes to him for this, while there were some who were, from the very beginning, in league with him.

In these circumstances and with this type of the army, it was really due to Imam Ali’s political ability and competence of military control and administration that he carried the war up to this stage, and if Mu’awiyah had not adopted this trick, there could have been no doubt in Imam Ali’s victory because the military power of the Syrian forces had been exhausted and defeat was hovering over its head.

In this connection, Ibn Abi’l-Hadid writes, ‘Malik Al-Ashtar had reached Mu’awiyah and grabbed him by the neck. The entire might of the Syrians had been smashed. Only so much movement was discernible in them as remains in the tail of a lizard which is killed, but the tail continues hopping right and left.’53

This situation delighted Mu’awiyah incredibly. He wrote a letter to Imam Ali (‘a), which was full of lies. He said that he only intended to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong and he only invited for the arbitration of the Holy Quran because he wanted to live under its shade!

Imam Ali (‘a), however, sent a letter to ‘Amr ibn Al-’As, inviting him to the true guidance. He thus wrote the following:

So now, this world turns away from the next one. He who is devoted to it achieves nothing from it except that it increases his greed and coveting for it. He who is devoted to it is not satisfied with what he obtains from it because of what he has not obtained. Eventually, there is separation from what has been amassed, and a breaking of what has been strengthened.

If you take a lesson from the past, you can be safe in the future; and that is an end to the matter. So, Abu-'Abdullah, do not shatter your reward and do not keep pace with Mu'awiyah in his wrong situation.[54]

However, 'Amr did not respond to the Imam ('a); rather, he insisted on transgression, hoping that he would gain worldly benefits from Mu'awiyah.

The catastrophic matter was the choosing of Abu-Musa Al-Ash'ari, the notorious hypocrite, to be the Imam's representative in the farce of arbitration. Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays plotted a conspiracy with other officers in the Imam's army to select Abu-Musa. Like a dog, Al-Ash'ath came running towards Imam Ali ('a) and said to him,

'All people have now consented to the arbitration and they are pleased to respond to the Syrians about the judgment of the Quran. If you please, you may come to Mu'awiyah and discuss the question.'

The Imam ('a) could not find a way to reject this request; rather, he said to Al- Ash'ath, 'If you wish, you may go to Mu'awiyah.'

This agent ran towards Mu'awiyah and exchanged talks with him, although the two had already plotted this scheme.

Al-Ash'ath asked, 'Mu'awiyah, for what reason have you raised the Quranic copies?'

Mu'awiyah answered, 'The reason is that you and we should follow what Allah ordered in his Book. So, send a man whom you accept on your part and we sill send one whom we accept on our part and we will then put them under the obligation of acting upon what is in the Book of Allah. Then, we must agree to what the two agree upon.'

Al-Ash'ath shouted, 'This is the truth.'

He then went back to Imam Ali (‘a) and declared openly what Mu’awiyah had said to him.

The soldiers of Imam Ali (‘a) went on saying, ‘We accept! We consent to this!’

Thus, Imam Ali (‘a) had no role at all in the issue.

Then, the Syrians shouted, ‘We consent to and choose ‘Amr ibn Al-’As.’

The Iraqis surrounded the Imam (‘a) and shouted, ‘We consent to and choose Abu-Musa Al-Ash’ari.’

The Imam (‘a) reproached them for this ill choice. He said,

Mu’awiyah would never choose for this matter any one whom he trusts and depends on his opinion than ‘Amr ibn Al-’As. Verily, a man from Quraysh cannot be faced except by another man from Quraysh. Therefore, you should choose Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas to face ‘Amr, because ‘Amr would not fasten any tie but that Abdullah would be able to untie it and ‘Amr would not be able to determine any issue but that Abdullah would revoke it.

Answering back, Al-Ash’ath shouted, ‘No! Two men from (the descendants of) Musar will never judge our issues before the coming of the Hour! You must entrust this issue with a man from Yemen, because they have chosen one from Musar.’

The Imam (‘a) said,

I only fear lest that man would deceive your man of Yemen, because ‘Amr never considers Allah at the least when a matter is related to his personal whims.

Nevertheless, these people refrained relentlessly from choosing Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas as their representative; rather, they insisted on Abu-Musa Al-Ash’ari. Abu’l-Aswad Al-Du'ali, warning against choosing Abu-Musa, said to Imam Ali (‘a), ‘O Amir Al-

Mu'minin, do not consent to Abu-Musa! When I examined and kneaded this man, I found his bottom very nigh in addition to his being from Yemen.'55

After the selection of the two referees, when Abdullah ibn Rafi' started writing down the terms of reference, he wrote the following words as a preamble to the document. 'Amir Al-Mu'minin Ali and Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan has decided that'' 'Amr ibn Al-'As objected to the word 'Amir Al- Mu'minin' and said that he might be the Emir of others but not theirs! He therefore asked the word to be deleted from the document.

Only his name and the father's name are entered. Al-Ahnaf ibn Qays told the Imam ('a) that he should not agree to the deletion of the word Amir Al-Mu'minin even if it caused renewal of the conflict. He added that if this word were deleted today, the leadership would not ever come back to him. Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays and his supporters insisted that the word be deleted.

In utter unconcern, the Imam ('a) was sitting quietly in his place and seeing the reflection of the Treaty of Al- Hudaybiyah in the events of the day. After a few moments of quiet, he said, 'When I drafted the agreement of the Treaty of Al-Hudaybiyah, I wrote the word 'Rasulullah (Allah's Messenger)' in the preamble when the representative of the Quraysh, Suhayl, said that they did not recognize him as Allah's Messenger and wanted me to delete the word and to enter 'Muhammad ibn Abdullah' instead. I was hesitant to score away the word 'Rasulullah,' But the Prophet (S) said:

Write what he wants. One day, you too will face a similar situation and you will be helpless.56

At this, 'Amr said angrily that he considered them infidel like those people. The Imam ('a) replied:

O son of Al-Nabighah! At which time were you not the friend of the transgressors and the enemy of the Muslims? You are like the mother who bore you! 57

Ibn Al-'As said, 'After today, we shall never sit together nor see each other's face.'

The Imam ('a) replied,

I too wish so! May Allah keep my company free of persons like you!

When the word 'Amir Al-Mu'minin' was struck off and the writing of the document was re-commenced, the Imam ('a) was asked if he considered Mu'awiyah and the people of Syria Muslims ? He said:

I do not accept Mu'awiyah and his companions as Muslims and believers. But Mu'awiyah is free to write what he wants about himself and his men, admit whatever he wishes to admit, and suggest whatever name he wants to suggest.[58]

At last, the agreement was drafted that had the following terms:

(1) It will be binding on the referees on both sides that their decision will be based on the Quran. If they are unable to arrive at a decision through the Book, they will make access to the Traditions of the Prophet (S) that are acceptable to both.

(2) The decision made by the referees shall be binding on both the parties, provided the decision is based on the Quran and the Prophetic traditions.

(3) The referees are to give their verdict within the current month of Ramadan. If they felt the need to extend the duration, they could mutually decide to do that.

(4) If the referees require evidences for arriving at a decision, they will be arranged.

(5) There will be no hostility until the referees come to a final conclusion about the dispute. Both the parties will ensure safety of the lives and properties of the referees. There will be no restriction on the movement of the parties to the dispute.

(6) If, before the verdict, any of the two referees die, his party can nominate another referee in his place.

(7) The verdict will be announced at a place that lies between Iraq and Syria. Most of the terms of this agreement concern the administrative requirements, and the basic requirement was that the verdict of the referees had to be in accordance to the Quran and the Prophetic traditions and that they had no right to arrive at any decision on their personal intuition and thinking.

If they did not follow this condition, their arbitration will be void. The earlier events are a proof that making claim for reTalibation and raising the Quran was with the purpose of misleading the people and the demand for arbitration too was an evil subterfuge of the Syrians. The referees neither referred to the Quran nor did they talk about the relevant traditions of the Prophet (S). One referee tried to defeat the other with futile arguments.

The Imam Returns To Al-Kufah

Overburdened by grief and distress, Imam Ali ('a) returned to Al-Kufah after he had been sure that Mu'awiyah could control the situation, which meant that the Imam's government declined and his army mutinied against him due to the sedition aroused by Mu'awiyah and 'Amr.

On his way back to Al- Kufah, some people faced the Imam ('a) with such cruel words like: 'You have killed the Muslims for no reason, flattered in the command of Allah, sought after sovereignty, and made ordinary men judge in the religion of Allah. There is no verdict but Allah's.'

Answering them, the Imam ('a) said,

The verdict of Allah is in your necks (i.e. you are the ones whom should be answerable for the application of Allah's verdict).

What detains the most wretched person from coming and dyeing my beard with the blood of my head? 59

Meeting Of The Arbitrators

The term on which the two arbitrators had agreed terminated. During this term, Mu'awiyah could band together his forces. He thus sent a messenger to Imam Ali ('a), asking for fulfillment of the agreement on arbitration. Mu'awiyah hurried to demand with the arbitration, because he knew for sure that Imam Ali's army was exposed to disunity and debility and the process of arbitration would come with his benefit, since Al-Ash'ari, whom the Iraqis had selected to represent them in this arbitration, was one of the bitterest enemies of Imam Ali ('a) and he would not do anything for the good of the Imam ('a).

The Iraqis thus sent Al-Ash'ari along with four hundred persons among whom was Abdullah ibn 'Abbas while the Syrians sent 'Amr ibn Al-'As the cunning along with four hundred persons. They met in an area between Iraq and Syria and 'Amr ordered that Al-Ash'ari would be given a special place and be served with the best kinds of food and drink.

Thus, 'Amr could bribe Al- Ash'ari. For three days, 'Amr did not discuss the matter with Al-Ash'ari until he became sure that Al-Ash'ari had become just like a toy in his hand. In his discourse with him, 'Amr used nice and honoring words. He once said to him, 'O Abu-Musa, you are the chief of Muhammad's companions, the most virtuous among them, and the foremost in honor.

You have seen how this community fell into a horrible seditious matter that might put an end to these people. Can you be the blessing of this community and then Allah will spare the lives through you? About the sparing of one life, Allah says,

'And whoever keeps it (i.e. a soul) alive, it is as though he kept alive all men.'

The matter must be greater for one who keeps alive the souls of all these people.'

Deceived by this false honoring, Al-Ash'ari went on discussing the means of reforming the matter and sparing the lives of the community. 'Amr said, 'You may depose Ali ibn Abi Talib, and I will depose Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan. The next step will be that we choose another person who has not been engaged in this sedition.'

Al-Ash'ari asked, 'Whom do you mean?'

'Amr answered, 'I mean Abdullah ibn 'Umar!'

'Amr had already known that Al-Ash'ari did not like Imam Ali ('a) while he liked Abdullah ibn 'Umar very much.

This suggestion delighted Al-Ash'ari who asked for covenants and oaths from 'Amr. Of course, 'Amr was too dissolute to refrain from making any covenant and taking any oath that would please Al-Ash'ari. He thus said to him, 'O Abu-Musa, ***'Surely, by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest.'(13:28)*** You may take any covenant you want from me.'

Thus, Al-Ash'ari consented to 'Amr and asked for a date at which they both would declare what they had just agreed upon. When the time of declaring their agreement came, 'Amr and Al-Ash'ari advanced towards the stage to speak. 'Amr thus asked Al-Ash'ari to go first and declare his decision, and Al-Ash'ari was deceived by the nice language of 'Amr and decided to do so.60

Abdullah ibn 'Abbas had already said to Abu-Musa, 'I feel that 'Amr will not abide by the decision you have mutually arrived at. He is a very cunning person and he will certainly trick you. Therefore, you must ask him to talk first and then you must make your announcement. If you do not take this caution, remember, he will trick you in such a manner that you will not be in a position to show your face to anyone.'

Unfortunately, Al-Ash'ari did not care for these words; so, he ran towards the stage to make his announcement. He thus said, 'In view of the welfare of the Muslim community, we have decided, after much deliberation, that we both shall depose Ali and Mu'awiyah and hand over the matter of the selection of the caliph to the shura system.

Therefore, I now remove Ali in the same way as I am removing this turban from my head. We also agreed that we would choose for the leadership a man who had accompanied Allah's Messenger and whose father, too, had accompanied him; namely, Abdullah ibn 'Umar!'[61]

When Al-Ash'ari came down, 'Amr ibn Al-'As hurried to the stage and said, 'O people, Abu-Musa Al-Ash'ari has just removed Ali and taken him out of the affair of caliphate. He better knows him than I am. As for me, I too remove Ali and fix Mu'awiyah in this position; therefore, I now declare Mu'awiyah as my and your leader!'

Astounded by this trickery, Abu-Musa ran towards 'Amr and said, 'What is the matter with you? Curse of Allah be upon you! You are only a dog; if you attack it, it lolls out its tongue; and if you leave it alone, it lolls out its tongue.'

Reproaching him, 'Amr said, 'You are like a donkey bearing books!'
Thus, Abu-Musa the foolish and lowly had control over the destiny of Muslims and removed from leadership the greatest person, Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) who was really the father of social justice and whose geniuses and talents covered all spaces of life. Instead, he nominated Abdullah ibn 'Umar whose father had described him as too imprudent to know how to divorce his wife!

However, 'Amr ibn Al-'As was true when he likened Abu-Musa to a donkey and Abu-Musa was true when he likened 'Amr to a dog!

This farce of arbitration led the Muslim community to unsolvable difficulties and problems. The soldiers of Imam Ali ('a), after this incident, entered into a long series of seditions although it was they who had forced the Imam ('a) to accept this farce.

When he realized that 'Amr had deceived him, Al-Ash'ari flew to Makkah accompanied by disgrace and shame for his offspring 62 and himself as well as those who had nominated him for the farce of arbitration.

As for 'Amr ibn Al-'As, he used to take pride in his ignominious act, thinking that he had achieved a great victory. He sent a letter to Mu'awiyah congratulating him for this result and belittling Abu-Musa and his lack of sagacity.

The people of Syria also rejoiced at this result and gloated over the people of Iraq.

When this news reached Imam Ali ('a), waves of sorrow and pain surrounded him. He thus gathered people and delivered this sermon:

All praise is due to Allah even though time has brought (for us) crushing calamity and great occurrence. I stand witness that there is no god but Allah the One; there is no partner for Him nor is there with Him any god other than Himself, and that Muhammad is His slave and His Prophet (May Allah's blessing and greeting be upon him and his progeny).

So now, certainly the disobedience of sympathetic counselor who has knowledge as well as experience brings about disappointment and result in repentance. I had given you my orders about this arbitration and put before you my hidden view, if Qasir's 63 orders were fulfilled but you rejected it (i.e. my orders) like rough opponents and disobedient insurgents until the counselor himself fell in doubt about his counsel and the flint (of his wit) ceased to give flame.

*Consequently, your and mine position became as the poet of (the tribe of) Hawazin says: 'I gave you my orders at Mun'araj Al-Liwa, but you did not see the good of my counsel until the noon of next day when it was too late.*64

Behold! The two men you had nominated as arbitrators threw the judgment of the Book behind their backs and depended upon their own opinions. They thus killed what the Quran had revived and then disagreed with one another with regard to their judgment. Both of them could neither lead to orthodoxy nor guide to the truth.

*So, Allah, His Messenger, and the Righteous Believer repudiated them. Now, you must ready yourselves for warfare and for marching. On Monday, you may be present in the camp, by the will of Allah.*65

After this incident, ordeals attacked Imam Ali ('a) successively; his government started falling down and his army refused to obey him anymore. Mu'awiyah bribed the officers of the Imam's army and could make them take sides by him against the Imam ('a). Besides, the faction of Khawarij issued forth, calling people to insurgence and mutiny.

Mutiny Of The Apostates

When the soldiers of Mu'awiyah raised copies of the Holy Quran on spearheads and demanded deceptively that the judgment of the Quran should be the arbitrator between the two parties, Imam Ali ('a) warned his soldiers against this trick and ordered them to keep on fighting. However, his soldiers surrounded him with unsheathed swords and forced him to accept the so- called arbitration.

He reproached them and proved that the matter was no more than a trick, but they shun his proofs and insisted on the arbitration. The Imam ('a) thus had to comply with their desire, but he suggested that they should nominate Abdullah ibn 'Abbas to be

their representative in this arbitration. However, they refused and insisted on nominating the feeble- minded Abu-Musa Al-Ash'ari.

Once again, the Imam ('a) warned them against the consequences of this ill nomination, but they insistently refused. When the arbitration ended with the defeat of Abu-Musa, the soldiers of the Imam ('a) felt sorry at a time when regret was a waste of time! They then mutinied against Imam Ali ('a) and held him responsible for what had happened, raising the false slogan of **'there is no verdict but Allah's.'** Commenting on this slogan, the Imam ('a) said,

It is a true word, but its purport is false.

When Imam Ali ('a) prepared his forces to wage a war against the army of Mu'awiyah, he received the news of the mutiny of a faction (i.e. Khawarij) who had declared armed insurgence and resided in Al-Nahrawan. They made mischief in the lands, shed the blood of Muslims, and declared the atheism of every one who would not follow their faith.

For instance, Abdullah the son of the Prophet's companion Al-Khabbab ibn Al-Aratt came across the Khawarij, carrying a copy of the Quran tied to his neck and accompanying his wife. They asked who he was. He said that he was the son of the Companion Al- Khabbab.

They said that if he was frightened coming across them, he should chase away the fear. They also said that they wanted to hear the traditions narrated by his father. Abdullah said that his father had heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying,

'A mischief will rise when the hearts of men will be dead and the bodies inanimate; men will be faithful believers the evening and by the morning they will be disbelievers. Again by the evening, they will become believers.' 66

They then asked him, 'Now, tell us what you say about Ali when he accepted the idea of the arbitration.'

He replied, 'He understands Allah more than you do and he is very careful in the matters of the religion and has a perfect vision.'

They said, 'You are a worshipper of personalities, and instead of deeds, you look for names. By Allah, we shall punish you for following the demands of your psyche! We shall kill you in such a manner that none else was ever killed that way.'

Saying this, they tied him up with ropes. Then, they took him and his pregnant wife near a date-palm tree. One date fell down from that tree, which one of them picked and put in his mouth. The others shouted, 'This is illegal!' The person immediately threw away the date.

Then, a pig passed that way and one of them killed it. The others said that what he had just done was mischief and until they convinced the owner of the pig, they were restless. When Abdullah saw this attitude of the Khawarij, he said, 'When you exercise such great care in small matters, I have no fear of harm from you, because I am a Muslim and I have not committed any crime to deserve to be killed!'

However, they did not pay any heed to his words and, throwing him to the ground, killed him heartlessly. They slit the stomach of his pregnant wife and killed her too.

They also killed three women of Banu'l-Ta'i and Ummu-Sinan Al-Saydawiyyah. After these heartless murders, they wanted to buy the fruits of a date-palm tree from a Christian. He said that he did not need any payment and they could take the fruits if they wanted. They said that they would not take a Dhimmi's material without paying for it. The Christian said that he was surprised that they had killed a good person like Abdullah ibn Khabbab for no sin of his and do not want at the same time to even take the fruits of a tree without paying for it!

Imam Ali's companions and soldiers did not want to march for fighting Mu'awiyah's army and leave the Khawarij behind them, because they feared lest these people would violate the properties and chastity of Muslims. The Imam ('a) complied with them and led the army towards Al-Nahrawan.67

He then sent a messenger to them, asking them to give up the persons who had murdered Abdullah ibn Khabbab in order that he would execute them to the religious punishment. However, the Khawarij answered, 'Nothing between Ali and us but swords, unless he admits that he committed disbelief and declares repentance as same as we did!'

Replying to them, the Imam ('a) said,

Storm may overtake you while there may be none to prick you for reforms. Shall I be witness to my becoming heretic after acceptance of the faith and fighting in the company of the Prophet? In that case, I shall be misguided and I shall not be on the right path.

*So, you should return to your evil places and get back on the traces of your heels. Beware! Certainly, you will meet, after me, overwhelming disgrace and sharp sword and tradition that will be adopted by the oppressors as a norm towards you.*68

When the army moved towards Al-Nahrawan, they learned that the Khawarij had crossed the canal of Tabristan somewhere between Halwan and Baghdad. When Imam Ali ('a) knew about this, he said, 'It cannot be! They are still on this side of the river and they will be killed on the land of Rumaylah.'

At that moment, a trooper of the advance guard came running and said, 'I have seen with my own eyes those men crossing the bridge.'

The Imam ('a) asked for his confirmation thrice; and every time, he swore by God that he had seen the Khawarij crossing the bridge to the other side. The Imam ('a) then said:

By Allah, they have not crossed the bridge! Their place of death is this side of the bridge! By Allah, less than ten of your men will be killed and less than ten of them (the Khawarij) will survive.[69]

On the one hand, there were messages that the Khawarij had crossed over to the other side and here Imam Ali ('a) insisted that they would meet their end only this side of the canal. With these exchanges, some people started doubting the Imam's words. One youth knitted his brows and said, 'If the Khawarij have already crossed the canal, I shall aim my spear at the chest of the Imam! Now he has started predicting about the things to come!'

When Imam Ali ('a) saw this state of mind of the people, he spurred his horse and galloped fast towards the canal. When he reached near the bank, he found the Khawarij camping this side of the canal. In that time, the army too reached the spot. When they found the Khawarij on their side of the bank, they raised their voices with the statement of *allahu-akbar* (**Allah is the Most Great**)! The Imam ('a) addressed his army, saying,

By Allah, I have neither told a lie nor was a wrong message at all given to me! [70]

The Imam ('a) established his camp at a distance of three miles away from the camp of the Khawarij. When the Khawarij saw the Imam's army, they started raising slogans of 'there is no verdict but Allah's.' They sent a word to the Imam ('a) that he still had the time to repent, and then they would enter into allegiance to him.

As a second alternative, he should demit his office as caliph to enable them to select a leader of their choice. The Imam ('a) sent them word to hand over the killers of his men; otherwise, his army would claim for reTalibation for their blood. He also informed them that if they agreed to this offer, they would be left alone until the army returned from Syria.

In that time, they could think over and decide to seek forgiveness for their past misbehavior. The Khawarij replied, 'We have all

killed your men. We all consider it legitimate to shed their and your blood!'

Instead of being angry over this reply, Imam Ali ('a) tried to make them see reason by sending Qays ibn Sa'd Al-Ansari to ask them to shun mischief. He reached the camp of the Khawarij and said to them, 'O people, you are committing a grave sin. Unnecessarily, you are calling us infidels. Beware of thoughtless killing of men!

Join with us in this jihad against the enemy.' At this, Abdullah ibn Shajarah Al-Salami said, 'Now, the curtains have been raised from our eyes! The darkness of vice has vanished! The radiance of the truth is everywhere. We cannot cooperate with you now at any cost!'

Qays said, 'I plead with you in the name of Allah! Do not indulge in mischief and do not cause your own deaths!'

After him, Abu-Ayyub Al-Ansari went to their camp and tried to stop them from doing mischief. He said, 'We do not understand what the cause of your enmity for us is. Why are you determined on fighting and battling? If you are so fond of fighting, come and we shall together fight against our common enemy!'

The Khawarij replied, 'If we side with you, you may once again impose on us the arbitration.'

Abu-Ayyub said, 'You must first look to the present and then you can bother about the future!'

However, the Khawarij remained adamant. All efforts at putting sense in them went futile. In the end, Imam Ali ('a) himself went to their camp and said,

O people, for lack of vision and understanding, you have veered away from us. Because of your false emotions, you have gone astray from the Right Path. I want to warn you! You will be killed in this valley and its turnings! The Muslim community will demean you and there will be

comments against you from all sides. Your stand was certainly wrong and your ire is unreasonable.

You might remember that I had warned you against accepting the arbitration and said that it was a trick, but you did not listen to my repeated appeals and, instead, you stopped fighting. If I accepted the arbitration, it was under pressure from your people. Even then, I did not accept it with closed eyes. I had taken a commitment from the referees that their verdict should be only in the light of the Holy Quran and the Prophet's traditions. However, they ruled against the Holy Book and the Prophet's traditions. Therefore, we have rejected their verdict.

The Khawarij answered, 'No doubt! We did accept the arbitration and because of that act, we rendered ourselves infidel. Yet, we have repented. You too must express penitence for accepting the arbitration and thereby becoming an infidel. Then, we shall enter under our allegiance to you and fight against the enemy.'

The Imam ('a) said,

After embracing the faith with the Holy Prophet (S), migrating from Makkah with him, taking part with him in the campaigns that he fought, do you now want me to accept that I committed an act of infidelity? How is it possible?

At this juncture, Khuraj raised noises and said, 'If you do not confess that you committed an act of infidelity, we do not want to talk any more with you!'

The Imam ('a) said,

By making senseless noises, matters cannot be resolved! Let us decide in this manner. You send a representative to me to discuss the matter. If he convinces me, I shall agree that the act of accepting the arbitration was infidelity and I express repentance for that. Otherwise, if I convince him, then you must shun the adamant attitude.

In the beginning, the Khawarij were reluctant, but in the end, they relented. They appointed Abdullah ibn Al-Kawwa' as their mouthpiece. The Imam (‘a) asked Ibn Al-Kawwa,

On what matter are you upset that earlier you had very willingly owed your allegiance to me? You also fought with my opponents in the Battle of the Camel.

He answered, ‘At that point, the need for the arbitration had not arisen.’

The Imam (‘a) said,

O Ibn Al-Kawwa! Is my decision more correct or that of the Prophet (S)?

Ibn Al-Kawwa said, ‘Certainly, the Prophet’s decision is more correct!’

Then, the Imam (‘a) asked,

You must have heard these words of Allah:

‘But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our near people and your near people, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars. (3:61)’

Did Allah ask the Prophet (S) to participate in the mutual imprecation of God’s curse on the lying party (i.e. Mubahalah) because he had any doubt about the Prophet (S) being truthful and those Christians the liars and He wanted to remove the doubt?

Ibn Al-Kawwa said, ‘Neither Allah nor His Prophet had any doubt about it. It was just a protest against the Christians.’

The Imam (‘a) said,

Then, the arbitration too was a protest.

Ibn Al-Kawwa said, 'Your agreeing to the appointment of the referees was a proof that you had a doubt whether you are on the right or not, although the war was fought on the basis that you were on the right and the Syrians were wrong. Therefore, you had said in clear terms to Mu'awiyah,

'If the Book of Allah decides in our favor, you follow us, and if it decides in your favor, we shall follow you.' What other meaning could be attached to this that you yourself were doubtful whether you were right or not. When you yourself had a doubt, then we too are justified to doubt about you.'

The Imam ('a) said,

This agreement was conditional. When an agreement is conditional, there is no question of our doubting the stand we had taken. Even the Prophet (S) had made such conditional agreements. Therefore, the Holy Quran says,

'Say: Then bring some other book from Allah which is a better guide than both of them that I may follow it, if you are truthful. (28:49)'

Ibn Al-Kawwa said, 'This is true. But by agreeing to the appointment of the referees, you had entrusted Allah's work to others and thus you committed infidelity.'

The Imam ('a) said,

I had only appointed Abu-Musa as the referee.

Ibn Al-Kawwa said, 'Abu-Musa is an infidel!'

The Imam ('a) asked,

Since when was he an infidel? When he was appointed a referee for the arbitration or when he gave his verdict?

Ibn Al-Kawwa said, 'It was so since he gave the verdict!'

The Imam ('a) said,

Then, you have accepted that when he was appointed as a referee, he was a Muslim and you had expected that he would give the verdict according of the commands revealed by Allah. Therefore, it was right to appoint him as a referee.

Ibn Al-Kawwa said, 'But when he gave the verdict, he did become an infidel!'

The Imam ('a) said,

If the Prophet (S) sent a Muslim to some infidels to invite them to the religion and, instead of preaching Islam, he started preaching them wrong things, will the Prophet (S) be responsible for the person's act?

Ibn Al-Kawwa said, 'No!'

The Imam ('a) added,

Then, if Abu-Musa turned an infidel, why do you blame me? What justification do you have to keep the swords over your shoulders and keep killing the Muslims? As far as the second referee 'Amr ibn Al-'As is concerned, he was appointed by Mu'awiyah. How could I name him arbitrator? If 'Amr ibn Al-'As had his way, he would even kill me.

Ibn Al-Kawwa asked, 'Then, how did you agree to one Muslim and the other infidel referee in the arbitration?'

The Imam ('a) said,

Allah has said the following permitting appointment of an arbitrator in the matters of dispute between a husband and a wife:

'And if you fear a breach between the two, then appoint judge from his people and a judge from her people. (4:35)'

If a Muslim man marries a Jewish or Christian woman and differences arise between them, it is then natural that the man will have a Muslim

referee from his family and the woman a non-Muslim referee from her family! Then, from the Holy Quran, is it not proved that while one referee is a Muslim, the other can be a non-Muslim?

When the Khawarij saw that Ibn Al-Kawwa' was not able to give satisfactory arguments, they sent word to him to terminate the discussion and go back. He therefore left the talks halfway and went back to his people. Although Imam Ali (‘a) proved his point, there was no change in the adamant attitude of the Khawarij.

Thus, there was no other alternative than fighting with them. The Imam (‘a) arranged his troops in proper formations and the right flank was in the command of Hujr ibn ‘Adi and the left under Shabath ibn Rab’i. The cavalry was under Abu-Ayyub Al-Ansari and the footmen under Abu-Qutadah Al- Ansari.

The men from Al-Madinah, who were seven or eight hundred in number, were put under Qays ibn Sa’d Al-Ansari. Imam Ali (‘a) himself took position at the heart of the formation.

The Khawarij too organized their rows.

When rows were arranging opposite rows, the Imam (‘a) gave a white banner to Abu-Ayyub Al-Ansari and sent him with a contingent of two thousand men to go towards the Khawarij. He went ahead with his men and announced, ‘O people, the Leader of the Believers says that those of you who decide to come under this banner or return to Al-Kufah or Al-Mada’in or leave company of that group, there is amnesty for them!’

The effect this announcement had was that Farwah ibn Nawfal Al-Ashja’i, who was among the elite of the Khawarij, started telling his tribesmen, ‘By Allah, I do not know with what justification we have decided to confront Ali ibn Abi Talib? Neither we have any proof to justify this conflict nor is there any reasonable justification for fighting. We shall stay away from these people and can later on decide on our course of action!’

Saying this, he moved away from the Khawarij with his five hundred tribesmen and went to Bandnajin.

Another group went towards Al-Kufah. One hundred persons came under the flag of Abu-Ayyub joining the Imam's army. This was a proof of the decent stand of the Imam ('a) and his spirit of forbearance and peace.

The Imam ('a) talked to the rest of the Khawarij about the terrifying effects of war, but they were adamant on their stand. Now, only the Khawarij had to make their initial strike for the battle to commence, because the Imam ('a) had instructed that his men should not be the first to start fighting.

At last, one of the Khawarij came out and killed three men from the Imam's army. The Imam ('a) moved forward and attacked him. When the sword hit him, the man said, 'How sweet going to the Heaven is!'

When Abdullah ibn Wahab heard this, he said, 'By Allah, I do not know if you are going to Heaven or Hell!'

When another man from the Khawarij heard this, he said, 'I have come here at the temptation of Abdullah ibn Wahab and even he does not know whether our stand is right or not and is not sure whether by fighting for this cause we go to Heaven or Hell?'

Then, along with the men from his tribe of Banu-Sa'd, he moved away from the ranks of the Khawarij. Instead of combating man-to-man, the Khawarij very soon started general fighting. Therefore, they broke the sheaths of their swords, put arrows in their bows, put up the spears, and, shouting the slogan: **'there is no verdict but Allah's,'** started a concerted attack. It was such a severe attack that the feet of the cavalry were uprooted.

They moved back a little and consolidated their positions once again. Imam Ali ('a) said to his men,

O youths, move forward and fight like tigers!

Saying this, he ('a) too stood up. Now, when the army attacked as a single unit under his command, there was blood everywhere. With this concerted attack, the rows of the enemy troops were uprooted. The Imam's sword was twisted with the intensity of use. He had to straighten it putting on his knee.

His army was moving forward and killing the enemy troops until they surrounded the Khawarij from all sides. Now, there was no way of escape for them. Four hundred persons of the Khawarij were severely wounded and not fit for fighting. Nine persons escaped and saved their lives. The rest of the Khawarij were killed.

When the battle was over, a search was made for a person; namely, Dhul- Thadiyah, 71 from the ranks of the Khawarij because Imam Ali ('a) used to say before their rebellion,

One group will veer away from the religion in a manner the arrow goes piercing through the game. Their sign is that among them there will be a person with a maimed hand.72

Some persons searched for him among the dead, but were unable to find his body. They returned to the Imam ('a) and said, 'We have searched all over and have failed to find the body of the person.'

The Imam ('a) said,

By Allah, his body is there among the dead!

Saying this, he took Sulayman ibn Thumamah Al-Hanafi and Rayyan ibn Sabrah to search for the dead body. When they reached the bank of the canal, about fifty bodies were lying in a ditch. When they removed some of the bodies, they found the body of Dhul-Thadiyah.

The Imam ('a) said,

Allah is the Most Great! I neither told a lie nor was false information given to me. If I had not had the doubt that you would turn your faces from action, I would have informed you about those who fought invisibly with the Khawarij and the right on which we are, they recognize it. I would have also informed you of the blessings that Allah has promised through the Prophet, peace of Allah be upon him and his Household.[73]

While returning through the piles of the dead Khawarij, the Imam ('a) said,

Pity on you! One who beguiled you has harmed you!

People asked, 'O Amir Al-Mu'minin! Who has beguiled them?'

The Imam ('a) replied,

Satan and their baser instincts did! These two had spread the web of guile for them and given them false hopes. It was etched on their minds that they would succeed in their nefarious designs.

After success in this battle, the Imam ('a) reminded his men of the astrologer's forecast that the moment of their departure for the campaign was inauspicious. The Imam ('a) thus said,

If we had started at the moment the astrologer had recommended, the ignorant people would say that the victory had come because of the astrologer's advice! [74]

The attitude of the Khawarij was very surprising. In the battle of Siffin, they put down their swords almost at the moment of victory and paved the way for the swords to kill them ultimately. They themselves insisted on the arbitration and they turned against it. They shattered the unity of people through mischief. Imam Ali ('a), who was a paragon of virtue, closeness with him was termed infidelity by the Khawarij.

They wanted him to break the agreement of the arbitration and fight with Mu'awiyah. If that had been their intent, they should have fought in the Battle of Siffin instead of supporting the idea of

the arbitration initially and then turning against it immediately once an agreement was reached.

The intention of the Khawarij was only to oppose Imam Ali (‘a). They created mischief and rebellion against him and made all sorts of false accusations. The Imam (‘a) tried his best to reform them. He neither caused them any hardships nor did he stop the stipends to their families.

However, when they went out of control totally and started harming and killing innocent persons, action against them became necessarily inevitable. Even in the battleground, the Imam (‘a) made a final effort to bring them back to the right path, but to no avail.

During this battle, and even earlier, the Imam (‘a) had made several predictions that proved true. All these were matters about which he had received information from the Holy Prophet (S). 75 It was as if his eyes were piercing through the future and seeing the events that were to take place. Here some of his predictions are mentioned:

(1) The Imam (‘a) told Zara’ah ibn Buruj Al-Ta’i that he would be killed and told Rabi’ah ibn Shaddad Al-Qasimi that his cadaver would be trampled under the hoofs of horses. Therefore, both these persons were killed during the battle and Rabi’ah’s cadaver was trampled under the hoofs of horses.

Kubaysah says that when he saw that Rabi’ah’s face and head were trampled under the hoofs of horses, he remembered Imam Ali’s word, saying, ‘What to say of Abu’l-Hasan’s virtues that whenever he said any thing, it would come true!’

(2) About the Khawarij, the Imam (‘a) said that they would die on a certain side of the canal and would not cross it to the other side. Therefore, they met their end on the side of the canal that is called Rumaylah.

(3) The Imam (‘a) informed that no more than ten persons from his army would be killed in the battle and not even ten would survive death from the army of the Khawarij. Therefore, eight persons died from his army and nine persons from the Khawarij escaped alive.

(4) The Imam (‘a) said about Dhul-Thadiyah that he would certainly be killed and his body was found lying in a heap of the dead enemies.

(5) The Imam (‘a) had said that the Khawarij were not totally finished and that they would raise their heads again. Therefore, after the Battle of Al-Nahrawan, they continued their minor skirmishes. They again rose during the Umayyad and ‘Abbasid regimes and Al-Muhallab ibn Safrah kept fighting with them for twelve years and creating rifts amongst their rank and file rendered them very weak. They scattered and went towards Oman and parts of Africa. They are still there in Muscat and Zanzibar.

(6) The Imam (‘a) predicted that they would keep raising their heads like brigands and dacoits. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid writes:

‘This prediction of Imam Ali (‘a) was proved true that the Khawarij would end up as brigands and highwaymen. Therefore, the movement of the Khawarij became weak and their youths were exterminated. Their condition deteriorated so much that their new generations became highway robbers who used to commit evil acts and cause mischief.’[76]

In brief, Imam Ali (‘a) sent many letters and said many words to the Khawarij that a big number of them returned to Al-Kufah, another number joined the Imam’s army, and a third group decided to withdraw. Then, only three thousand persons headed by Abdullah ibn Wahab Al-Rasibi remained and insisted on fighting against the Imam (‘a).

However, when the Imam (‘a) despaired of taking them back to the truth, he mobilized his army and ordered them not to start

fighting these people before they would do. Seeing this, the Khawarij prepared themselves for fighting and attacked the Imam's army, shouting, 'There is no verdict but Allah's.' It did not take more than one hour when Imam Ali's army could kill them all except nine persons who could survive that battle.

When the Imam ('a) was informed that all of the Khawarij were killed, he expressed that they still existed in the loins of men and wombs of women. Whenever a chief would appear from among them, he would be cut down until the last men of them would turn thieves and robbers. 77

About Dhul-Thadyah the head of the Khawarij, Imam Ali ('a) said to his companions,

The Messenger of Allah (S) said to me, 'A people will appear who speak the words of truth, but their words do not go beyond their throats. They will depart from the truth as fast as an arrow departs a bow. Their mark is that one of them has a hand that is shorter than the other and on the palm of his hand there are a few black hairs.' If he is among the killed ones, then you have killed the wickedest of all people. 78

Imam Ali ('a) then buried the killed persons from both the parties, distributed among his followers the weapons of the Khawarij, and took back their luggage and slaves to their owners.

The Battle of Al-Nahrawan was the result of the farce of raising the copies of the Holy Quran and it gave rise to forming a violent revolutionary party that rebelled against all the governments of the Islamic State and caused the bloodshed of many people and the spread of mischief and discrepancy among Muslims.

- 1. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:102.
- 2. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:103.
- 3. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:162.
- 4. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:118.
- 5. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:129.
- 6. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:77.

- 7. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:77.
- 8. Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:89.
- 9. When all the people of Al-Madinah unanimously swore allegiance to Imam Ali ('a), Mu'awiyah refused to acquiesce apprehending danger for his own power, and in order to contest the Imam's caliphate, he concocted the excuse that it had not been agreed to unanimously and that therefore after canceling it, there should be another general election, although caliphate from which the process of election was started was the result of a timely situation. There was no question of the common vote therein so that it could be called the result of the people's election. However, it was imposed on the people and assumed to be their verdict.

  From then, it became a principle that whomever the nobles of Al-Madinah elected would be deemed to represent the entire world of Islam and no person would be allowed to question it, whether he was present at the time of election or not. In any case, after the establishment of the principle, Mu'awiyah had no right to propose a re-election nor to refuse allegiance when he had in practice recognized these caliphates which, it was alleged, had been settled by the important people of Al-Madinah.

  That is why when he held this election to be invalid and refused allegiance, Imam Ali ('a) pointed out to him the (recognized) way of election and demolished his argument. It was a method known as arguing with the adversary on the basis of his wrong premises so as to demolish his argument, since Imam Ali ('a) never at any state regarded consultation (with chiefs) or the common vote to be the criterion of validity of caliphate.

  Otherwise, in connection with the caliphate about which it is alleged that they were based on the unanimity of the Muhajirun and the Ansar, he would have regarded that unanimity

of vote as a good authority and held them as valid; but his refusal for allegiance in the very first period, which cannot be denied by anyone, is a proof of the fact that he did not regard these self-concocted methods as the criterion of the validity of caliphate. That is why at all times he continued pressing his own case for caliphate, which was also established on the basis of the Holy Prophet's words and deeds.

However, to place it before Mu'awiyah meant opening the door to questions and answers. He therefore attempted to convince him with his own premises and beliefs so that there could be no scope for interpretation or for confusing the matter. In fact, Mu'awiyah's real aim was to prolong the matter so that at some point his own authority he might get support. (Quoted from Nahj Al-Balaghah in the English version) [Translator]

- 10. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 2:233; Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l- Siyasah 1:71; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 3:300.
- 11. Muhammad ibn Yazid Al-Mubarrad, Al-Kamil 1:155; Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-
'Iqd Al-Farid 2:233; Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:77; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:202.
- 12. Muhammad ibn Yazid Al-Mubarrad, Al-Kamil 1:155; Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al- 'Iqd Al-Farid 2:233; Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:77; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:202.
- 13. On the day of the Conquest of Makkah, Yazid ibn Abi-Sufyan, Mu'awiyah's brother, led an armed group of Quraysh to fight the Muslims and prevent them from entering Makkah. In this conflict, some people were killed and some others were taken as prisoners. Yazid was one of those whom were taken as captives on that day. Ironically, the same Yazid was appointed by Abu-Bakr as the deputy governor of Syria. On his way to Syria to practice his official missions, Yazid ibn Abi-Sufyan was riding on an animal while Abu-Bakr was seeing him off walking!

- 14. Ibn Qutsaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:62.
- 15. Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:200-1.
- 16. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:50; Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:203.
- 17. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:50; Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:204.
- 18. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:50.
- 19. Ahmad Zaki Safwat, Jamharat Rasa'il Al-'Arab 1:424-7; Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:210-3.
- 20. One day, the Holy Prophet (S) saw Abu-Sufyan riding a camel while his son Yazid was grasping its bridle and Mu'awiyah driving it. Upon this scene, the Holy Prophet (S) imprecated Allah's curse upon the three, saying,
  O Allah, please pour Your curses upon the rider, the grasper, and the driver.
  Tarikh At-Tabari 11:357; Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq'at Siffin, pp. 344.
- 21. The nephew of Banu-Sahm is 'Amr ibn Al-'As, Mu'awiyah's assistant. 'Amr's mother was notorious prostitute.
- 22. Ahmad Zaki Safwat, Jamharat Rasa'il Al-'Arab 1:427.
- 23. By this statement, Imam Ali ('a) refers to the deeds that the people of Quraysh, headed by Abu-Sufyan (Mu'awiyah's father), did against the Holy Prophet (S). The same people of Quraysh then refused that caliphate and Prophethood should come together in the same family. (Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 12:9)
- 24. When the Battle of Uhud ended with the defeat of the Muslims' army, Hind,Mu'awiyah's mother, hurried to the dead body of the martyr kamzah ibn Abd Al-MutTalibb and mutilated it so maliciously. She took out the liver and chewed it. She then cut off some of his body parts and used them as necklace! She is thus known as the liver-eater. Likewise, Abu-Sufyan stopped at the dead body of kamzah, kicked it, and showed rejoicing and gloating. (Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi,

Mu'tamar Al-Saqifah [the English version, entitled The Saqifah Conspiracy, translated by Badr Shahin, published by the Ahl Al-Bayt World Assembly - 2010], pp. 31) [Translator]

- 25. Hajar is a region in the Arabia Peninsula known for producing the best kind of dates.
- 26. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 2:234; Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:177-85.
- 27. i.e. Abu-Bakr and 'Umar.
- 28. 'The Chief of Martyrs' is the epithet of the martyr Hamzah ibn Abi Talib, the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S) and Imam Ali ('a).
- 29. 'The Flier in Paradise' and 'The Two-Winged' are two epithets of Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, the cousin of the Holy Prophet (S) and the brother of Imam Ali ('a).
- 30. The belier (mukadhdhib) from the members of the Umayyah clan is the chief of hypocrites and the head of deviation; namely, Abu-Sufyan.
- 31. 'The lion of the opposing groups' (i.e. the chief of the enemies of Islam) is the epithet of 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah.
- 32. i.e. Imam Al-Hasan and Imam Al-Husayn.
- 33. 'The children of Hell' is the epithet of the children of the Umayyah clan.
- 34. i.e. Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a).
- 35. 'The bearer of firewood' is Ummu-Jamil, the paternal aunt of Mu'awiyah. This wicked woman used to put thorns in the way the Holy Prophet (S) used to take.
- 36. The meaning is that the person who goes too far in counseling others will be thought to have his personal ends in so doing, even though his counsel may well be based on sincerity of intention and selflessness. This line is used as a proverb on such occasions.
- 37. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 28; Al-Qalqashandi, Subh Al-A'sha 1:229; Al-Nuwayri,
  Nihayat Al-Irab 7:233.
- 38. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:282.
- 39. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:282.

- 40. Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:220; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 3:210; Na•r ibn Muzahim, Waq'at Siffin, pp. 151.
- 41. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:141.
- 42. Al-Tha'alibi, Lata'if Al-Ma'arif, pp. 158.
- 43. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq'at Siffin, pp. 185.
- 44. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq'at Siffin, pp. 221-4.
- 45. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 14.
- 46. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq'at Siffin, pp. 232.
- 47. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 1:305.
- 48. To this disgraceful event, many poets and men of letters referred sarcastically. For instance, Abu-Firas Al-Hamadani, a famous Arab poet, says in one of his most famous poems:
  It is worthless to fend off death by means of humility. Thus did 'Amr do when he warded off death from himself via his anus! [Translator]
- 49. Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:239.
- 50. Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:241.
- 51. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:217.
- 52. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 208.
- 53. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 11:30-31.
- 54. Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:268.
- 55. Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Amali 1:292.
- 56. Al-Sirah Al-Halabiyyah, 3:33.
- 57. Tarikh At-Tabari, 4:37.
- 58. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:110.
- 59. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Al-Thaqafi, Al-Gharat 1:30.
- 60. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 3:315.
- 61. Tarikh At-Tabari 6:39.
  Commenting on this announcement, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, in Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 13:315, states: Suwayd ibn Ghaflah has reported that he, once, was with Abu-Musa Al-Ash'ari on the bank of the River Euphrates during the reign of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan when Abu-Musa reported to him that the Holy

Prophet (S) had said, 'The Israelites were engaged in discrepancy that lasted for a long time until the two parties of the discrepancy agreed on appointing two misleading referees to judge in the question. So, because they were devious and aberrant, these two referees misled those who accepted their verdicts. My community will fall in such discrepancy and they will appoint two devious referees who will mislead whoever follows them.'

Suwayd, having heard these Prophetic words from Al-Ash'ari, said to him, 'O Abu-Musa, beware lest you will be one of these devious referees.' Abu-Musa took off his shirt and said, 'I disavow being so before Allah as same as this shirt of mine has disavowed my body!'

- 62. People all over history did not stop disgracing the descendants of Abu-Musa Al-Ash'ari for his disappointment in the farce of arbitration. Al-Farazdaq, a famous Arab poet, once heard Abu-Baradah the son of Al-Ash'ari saying, 'I am too proud, because I am the son of one of the two arbitrators!' Al-Farazdaq answered, 'One of these two arbitrators was thoughtless and the other was sinful. Now, you can choose one of them to be your father!' (Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 19:353)

  On another occasion, a man looked at one of the descendants of Abu-Musa Al-Ash'ari strutting boastfully. He thus said, 'Look how this man walks, as if it was his father who had deceived 'Amr ibn Al-'A•, but not the otherwise!'
- 63. This is a proverb used on an occasion when the advice of a sincere and well-wishing counselor is rejected and afterwards it is repented.
- 64. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 35.
- 65. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf, pp. 366.
- 66. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:172.
- 67. When the army of the Imam ('a) started its journey, an astrologer said, 'O Amir Al- Mu'minin, I know about the movement of the stars and this is not auspicious time to start the journey. There may be great harm in store for us!'

  The Imam ('a) said, 'Can you tell me what is inside the belly

of my horse?'
He said, 'I can calculate and say!'
The Imam ('a) said, 'One who believes in what you say, will be denying the writ of the Holy Quran. The Holy Book says:

'Surely, Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the hour, and He sends down the rain and He knows what is in the wombs; and no one knows what he shall earn on the morrow; and no one knows in what land he shall die. Surely, Allah is Knowing, Aware. (31:34)'

Then the Imam ('a) chided the astrologer and told his troops that they should not give any cognizance to such words of superstition and trust on Allah.

- 68. History corroborates that after Imam Ali's passing away, the Khawarij had to face all sorts of ignominy and disgrace and wherever they raised their heads for creating trouble, they were met with swords and spears. Thus, Ziyad ibn Abih, 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad, Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, Mus'ab ibn Al-Zubayr, and Al-Muhallab ibn Abi-Sufrah left no stone unturned in annihilating them from the surface of the globe, particularly Al-Muhallab chased them for nineteen years, routed them thoroughly, and rested only after completing their destruction.

  Al-Tabari, an Arab historicist, writes that when ten thousand persons of the Khawarij gathered on a mountain near Ahwaz (currently, southern Iran) where Al-Muhallab faced them so steadfastly that he killed seven thousand of them, while the remaining three thousand fled towards Kirman for life. When the governor of Persia noticed their rebellious activities, he surrounded them in a region called Sabur and killed a good number of them.

  Those remained again fled to Isfahan and Kirman. From there, they again formed a contingent and advanced towards Al-Kufah via Al-Basrah. Al-Harith ibn Abi-Rabi'ah Al-Makhzumi and Abd Al-Rahman ibn Mikhnaf Al-Azdi stood

up with six thousand combatants to stop their advance, and turned them out of Iraq's boundaries. In this way, successive encounters completely trampled their military power and turning them out of cities compelled them to roam about in the deserts. Afterwards also, when they rose in the form of groups, they were crushed. (Tarikh At-Tabari 2/580-591; Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l- Tarikh 4/196-206).

- 69. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:174.
- 70. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:174.
- 71. The following narration is quoted from Ibn kajar Al-'Asqalani, Al-I•abah fi Tamyiz Al- Sahabah 1:484 under the title: Biography of Anas ibn Malik:
  Anas said that a man lived in the time of the Holy Prophet (S) whom we admired his piety and devotion very much. When we mentioned that man before the Holy Prophet (S), he could not recognize him. In the meantime, the man appeared before us and we said to the Holy Prophet (S), 'This is the man we intend.'

  The Holy Prophet (S) looked at him and said, 'You are referring to a man whose face carries a satanic sign!' The man came towards us. When he was close enough, he stood up and did not greet us. Immediately, the Holy Prophet (S) said to him, 'I adjure you by Allah; when you stopped here, you said to yourself, 'No one of this group is better or more favorable than I am.' Have you not said so?' The man admitted, and then entered the mosque to offer a prayer. The Holy Prophet (S) asked, 'Which one of you will do the mission of killing this man?' Abu-Bakr volunteered and went to do the mission, but he found the man offering a prayer and said, 'This will be strange! How can I kill a man in a state of offering a prayer while the Messenger of Allah (S) has warned us against killing men who perform prayers?' He thus went back. The Prophet (S) asked, 'What have you done?'

  Abu-Bakr answered, 'I did not want to kill him while he was offering a prayer, because you warned us against so.' The

Holy Prophet (S) then said to his companions, 'Which one of you will go and kill the man?' 'Umar said, 'I will.' However, 'Umar found the man offering prayer and in the posture of prostration; so, he said to himself, 'Abu-Bakr is better than I am.' He thus left without doing the mission. The Holy Prophet (S) asked 'Umar, 'What have you done?' 'Umar apologized that he found the man in a state of prostration and could not kill him.' Once again, the Holy Prophet (S) asked, 'Who will kill the man?' Imam Ali ('a) said, 'I will.' The Holy Prophet (S) said, 'Yes, you can do this mission if only you can catch him.' Hence, the Imam ('a) left towards the man and found that he had left the place. He returned to the Holy Prophet (S) and informed him about the matter, and the Holy Prophet (S) commented, 'If this man was killed, no two men from my community would ever disagree, and the first of them would be just like the last.'

- 72. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:175.
- 73. Tarikh Al-Tabari 4:366.
- 74. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:173.
- 75. Zayd ibn Ali reported his father on the authority of Imam Al-Husayn ibn Ali ('a) on the
authority of his father ('a) who quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:
Almighty Allah has ordered me to choose you (Ali) as my brother and my legatee. You are my vicegerent and successor during my life and after I die. Whoever obeys you is deemed to have obeyed me and whoever disobeys you is deemed to have disobeyed me. Whoever refutes you has in fact refuted me, and whoever oppresses you is deemed to have oppressed me. O Ali, you are from me and I am from you. Had you not been there 'the People of the River' would not have been slain.
Imam Ali ('a) asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, who are the People of the River?'
The Holy Prophet (S) replied,
They are a group of people called Khawarij who would rebel

and renounce Islam as fast as an arrow leaves the bow. (Shaykh Al-tusi, Al-Amali 1:203)

- 76. The details of the Battle of Al-Nahrawan have been quoted from Biography of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib; English translation of Sirat Amir Al-Mu'minin by Mufti Ja'far Husayn; translated into English by Sayyid Tahir Bilgrami.
- 77. This prophecy of Imam Ali ('a) proved true word by word. Every chief of the Khawarij who rose was put to sword. Two of the nine persons who could survive the Battle of Al- Nahrawan fled to Oman, two others to Kirman, two others to Sajistan, two others to the Arabian Peninsula, and one to Tell-Mawzun. They started promulgating for the faith of the Khawarij at these places. (Al-Shahristani, Al-Milal wa'l-NihAl 1:159)
- 78. Muhammad Baqir Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:400.

Decline Of The State Of Truth

The wars of Siffin and Al-Nahrawan brought about horrific events to not only Imam Ali ('a) but also the Muslim world. It caused the decline of the government of Imam Ali ('a), who represented the utter truth. It also gave victory to Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan who represented the paganism of Quraysh. Declaring his victory, Mu'awiyah is reported to have said, 'After the Battle of Siffin, I fought against Ali without army, efforts, or equipments.'1

Thus, Mu'awiyah had control over people and declared himself as the general ruler of Muslims. Imam Ali ('a) became isolated from any political or military authority, since his soldiers did not obey him anymore. They became bored with fighting and lost their morale.

When Imam Ali ('a) ordered them to reside in a place while they were on their way to fight against Mu'awiyah, they began to sneak away one after another. None of them remained with the

Imam (‘a) except for a few prominent companions of him. Therefore, he had to return to Al-Kufah. 2

Moreover, the majority of the officers of the Imam’s army had secret connections with Mu’awiyah who used to endue them with seductive gifts and bribes. The most prominent of these officers was Al-Ash’ath ibn Qays whom Mu’awiyah promised of fortunes and senior office in his government. He thus worked towards rallying the other officers against the Imam (‘a) and led a mutiny inside the army.

Unlike Imam Ali’s army, the army of Mu’awiyah kept on their unity and obedience to their leader. Al-Hajjaj ibn Khuzaymah once said to Mu’awiyah, ‘You can do what Ali cannot, because you have soldiers who say no word when you are silent, keep silent when you speak, and do not dare to ask when you order them. On the other hand, Ali has soldiers who answer back when he speaks and do not stop asking when he keeps silent.’3

Although Imam Ali (‘a) could have controlled the mutiny of his soldiers and bring them back under his obedience by such immoral acts like bribing the chiefs and putting to death the mutinous officers, he was too self-righteous to follow such wicked means. Declaring this fact, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

How long shall I accord your consideration that is accorded to camels with hollow hump, or to worn clothes which when stitched on one side give way on the other? Whenever a vanguard force of Syria hovers over you, everyone of you shuts his door and hides himself like the lizard in its hole or a badger it its den.

By Allah, he whom people like your support must suffer disgrace and he who throws arrows with your support is as if he throws arrows that are broken at head and tail. By Allah, within the courtyard, you are quite numerous but under the banner, you are only a few.

Certainly, I know what can improve you and how your crookedness can be straightened, but I shall not improve your condition by marring my-

self. Allah may disgrace your faces and destroy you. You do not understand the right as you understand the wrong and do not crush the wrong as you crush the right.[4]

The matter did not stop at this extent; when Mu'awiyah took root, he started invading the regions that were under the command of Imam Ali ('a). He also launched campaigns of terror to prove to the people that Imam Ali ('a) would not be able to protect them, since he had no military force to procure the security of people. Mu'awiyah thus began with Egypt, the most powerful center of the Muslim territories, and made it the victual of 'Amr ibn Al-'As.

Imam Ali ('a) had appointed Qays ibn Sa'd Al-Ansari as the deputy governor of Egypt and Qays could spread justice among the people and could eliminate all disorders and chaos that were prevalent in Egypt. He ('a) then deposed Qays and appointed Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr in this office.

When Muhammad failed to have a hold over the disorder that broke out in this region, Imam Ali ('a) deposed him and appointed Malik Al-Ashtar instead. However, while Malik was on his way to assume the new office, Mu'awiyah could assassinate him through poison.

Under the commandership of 'Amr ibn Al-'As, Mu'awiyah mobilized an army to occupy Egypt. Imam Ali ('a) sought the help of the people of Al-Kufah for their Egyptian brothers, but most of people refrained from responding to him except for a few number of them.

Unwillingly, these people marched towards Egypt to fight against Mu'awiyah's army, but on their way thereto, they learnt that 'Amr had occupied Egypt, killed Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr, and set his body to fire. Hence, the soldiers went back to Al-Kufah. On this occasion, the Imam ('a) delivered a vehement speech in which he criticized his soldiers for their weakness and eulogized Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr, showing his sorrow for this great loss.

Raids On The Muslim Regions

After the conquest of Egypt, Mu'awiyah became more powerful while Imam Ali's authority became weaker and mutiny among the troops became more widespread.

Mu'awiyah then launched raids on the territories that were under the command of the Imam ('a) so as to prove that the Imam ('a) was unable to protect his people.

Raids On Al-Iijaz And Yemen

Under the commandership of the notorious terrorist Busr ibn Arta'ah, Mu'awiyah sent a three-thousand soldier batTalibon to raid on Al-Hijaz and Yemen. When they surrounded the city of Al-Madinah, they did not face any resistance from its inhabitants; therefore, they could occupy the city effortlessly.

Busr then headed for the city of Makkah, occupied it, and made its people pay homage to Mu'awiyah. He then headed for Yemen whose deputy governor was 'Ubaydullah ibn Al-'Abbas who fled the combat and came to Al-Kufah to inform the Imam ('a) about what had happened.

When Busr entered Yemen, he searched for the two children of 'Ubaydullah ibn Al-'Abbas and killed them.5

Thus, Busr spread terror among the people of Yemen, committed massacres, captured their women, and committed all wicked and shameful deeds he could do.

When this news reached Imam Ali ('a), he felt great sorrow and delivered the following sermon that expresses his feelings towards such acts:

I have been informed that Busr overpowered Yemen. By Allah, I have begun thinking about these people that they would shortly snatch away the whole country through their unity on their wrong and your disunity from your own right and separation, your disobedience to your Imam in matters of right and their obedience to their leader in matters of wrong, their fulfillment of the trust in favor of their master and your betrayal, their good work in their cities and your mischief. Even if I give you charge of a wooden bowl, I fear you would run away with its handle.

O Allah, they are disgusted of me and I am disgusted of them. They are weary of me and I am weary of them. Change them for me with better ones and change me for them with worse one. O Allah, melt their hearts as salt melts in water. By Allah, I wish I had only a thousand horsemen from the tribe of Firas ibn Ghanim, as the poet says:

If you call them, the horsemen would come to you like the summer cloud. [6]

Raids On Iraq

Having occupied Egypt and other Muslim territories, Mu'awiyah formed four batTalibons to raid on Iraq in order to fill the hearts of the Iraqis with terror and fear and to make them understand the Imam's incapability of protecting them. He sent Al-Nu'man ibn Bashir Al-Ansari with one thousand men to invade 'Ayn Al-Tamr whose deputy governor was Malik ibn Ka'b.

Although Malik had under his command one thousand fighters, he had already permitted them to visit their families in Al-Kufah; therefore, when Mu'awiyah's batTalibon raided on the city, there were only one hundred soldiers with Malik who, yet, fought so bravely that his soldiers and he forced Mu'awiyah's soldiers to run away.

When this news reached Imam Ali ('a), he delivered a speech in which he asked the people of Al-Kufah to help their brethren in 'Ayn Al-Tamr, saying,

O people of Al-Kufah, is it true that whenever a vanguard force from the people of Syria comes upon you, each one of you closes his door and keeps himself inside his house just like a lizard and a hyena? Now, it is clear that whomever you support is really humiliated and whoever uses you as arrows will most surely miss the target.

Disgrace and shame on you! I occasionally talked to you confidentially and on other occasions called on you openly! Yet, you neither act as free men when you encounter your enemies nor do you prove yourselves as true brothers when you are called for help.[7]

Raids On Hit

Supplied with six thousand fighters, Sufyan ibn 'Awf was commissioned by Mu'awiyah to occupy Hit, a region western Iraq. Mu'awiyah ordered Sufyan to raid on Al-Anbar and Al-Mada'in afterwards. In Al-Anbar, Sufyan was encountered by a force of Imam Ali's troops and a battle took place there during which the commander of the Imam's troop was killed along with other thirty soldiers. Sufyan thus booted the city and returned to Mu'awiyah.

When Imam Ali ('a) was informed, he delivered the following speech:

Now then, surely Jihad is one of the doors of Paradise, which Allah has opened for His chief friends. It is the dress of piety and the protective armor of Allah and His trustworthy shield. Whoever abandons it, Allah covers him with the dress of disgrace and the clothes of distress. He is kicked with contempt and scorn, and his heart is veiled with screens of neglect. Truth is taken away from him because of missing Jihad. He has to suffer ignominy and justice is denied to him.

Beware! I called you insistently to fight these people night and day, secretly and openly, and exhorted you to attack them before they attacked you, because by Allah, no people have been attacked in the hearts of their houses but they suffered disgrace; but you put it off to others and forsook it until destruction befell you and your cities were occupied. The horse-

men of Banu-Ghamid have reached Al-Anbar and killed Hassan ibn Hassan Al- Bakri. They have removed your horsemen from the garrison.

I have come to know that every one of them entered upon Muslim women and other women under protection of Islam and took away their ornaments from legs, arms, necks and ears and no woman could resist it except by saying such statements like: 'We are for Allah and to Him we shall return' and by imploring for mercy.

Then, they went back laden with wealth without any wound or loss of life. If any Muslim dies of grief after all this, he is not to be blamed but rather there is justification for him before me.

How strange! How strange! By Allah, my heart sinks to see the unity of these people on their wrong and your dispersion from your right. Woe and grief befall you! You have become the target at which arrows are shot. You are being killed and you do not kill. You are being attacked but you do not attack. Allah is being disobeyed and you remain agreeable to it.

When I ask you to move against them in summer, you say, 'It is hot weather; spare us until heat subsides from us!' When I order you to march in winter, you say, 'It is severely cold; give us time until cold clears from us!' These are just excuses for evading heat and cold because if you run away from heat and cold, you would be, by Allah, running away in a greater degree from sword (i.e. war).

O you semblance of men, not men, your intelligence is that of children and your wit is that of the occupants of the curtained canopies (i.e. women kept in seclusion from the outside world). I wish I had not seen you nor known you. By Allah, this acquaintance has brought about shame and resulted in repentance. May Allah fight you! You have filled my heart with pus and loaded my bosom with rage.

You made me drink mouthful of grief one after the other. You shattered my counsel by disobeying and leaving me so much so that the people of Quraysh started saying that the son of Abu Talib is brave but he does not know tactics of war. Allah may bless them! Is any one of them fiercer in

war and older in it than I am? I rose for it although yet within twenties, and here I am, have crossed over sixty, but one who is not obeyed can have no opinion.[8]

Raid On Waqisah

Mu'awiyah then sent Al-Dahhak ibn Qays Al-Fihri along with three thousand soldiers to raid on Waqisah and spread horror among its people. So, Al- Dahhak booted the fortunes of people and killed whomever he thought to be loyal to Imam Ali ('a). He then raided on other neighboring regions, violated all inviolable things, and committed all prohibitions.

When Imam Ali ('a) was informed about these actions, he once again called on people to face these attacks, but nobody responded to him. He thus delivered this speech:

By Allah, I wished I had one man of these (Syrian soldiers) for every eight men of you. Woe may befall you! Come out with me and then you may leave me as you like. By Allah, I never dislike meeting my Lord as long as I have this intention and this insight. In fact, this will bring me a great rest and relief from talking to you and bearing suffering because of you.[9]

The Imam ('a) then marched towards these regions to stand against the attacks of Mu'awiyah's troops, but nobody joined him except Abdullah ibn Ja'far, his nephew. Upon seeing this, some people joined the Imam ('a) who led them to chase Al-Dahhak, who had earlier left.

Raid On Al-Kufah

Mu'awiyah did not stop his raids on the various regions of Iraq without facing any resistance, because he was sure of victory and ability to overthrow the government of Imam Ali ('a). He thus launched more raids near the capital, Al-Kufah, spreading horror

among people, while the Imam (‘a) did not have any power to protect them and procure them security.

The Mischief Of The Khawarij

In the Battle of Al-Nahrawan, Imam Ali (‘a) did not terminate the Khawarij totally; rather, he exterminated a faction of them. Many of them survived that battle and went on scheming plots and conspiracies against the Imam (‘a), because they learnt that he would not assault or punish them.

Making use of the Imam’s leniency and care for procuring the public freedoms, the Khawarij used to challenge the Imam (‘a) openly. One of them; namely, Al-Khirrit ibn Rashid Al-Sami, led thirty of his companions and said to Imam Ali (‘a), ‘By Allah, I will never obey any of your orders, I will never follow you in a congregational prayer, and I will leave you tomorrow.’

In reply, the Imam (‘a) said nice words to and released him, but Al-Khirrit returned to his folks, Banu-Najiyah, who had been partisans of ‘A'ishah in the Battle of the Camel, and they all decided to wage war against Imam Ali (‘a). However, the Imam (‘a) mobilized an army to make them return to obedience to him or they would encounter a war.
Many debates took place between the two parties, but to no avail. Finally, the two parties engaged in an encounter that resulted in the fleeing of Al-Khirrit and his people towards Ahwaz where he started promulgating for his faith, spreading crime, and discouraging people from following Islam. As a result, many people refrained from defraying the zakat duty and many others abandoned their faith of Islam. The Imam’s army followed him to Ahwaz and could kill many of his followers and capture many others.

Imam Ali Beseeches For Departure From The World

Successive ordeals and crises surrounded Imam Ali (‘a), especially after he saw how Mu’awiyah became strong enough to hold sway over the entire Muslim community, while Imam Ali (‘a) in Al-Kufah was surrounded by savage people who disliked his justice and criticized his policies of equality.

The other point that affected the Imam (‘a) was the collapse of his army, since Mu’awiyah had bribed the majority of the officers and the Khawarij worked painstakingly towards promulgating their idea that called for deposing the Imam (‘a).

Thus, Imam Ali (‘a) became isolated from all authorities and his orders were not carried out at all. He once foretold his people that they, after his departure, would go through ceaseless crises and would suffer many tribulations at the hands of the coming tyrannical ruling authorities. He thus said,

Behold! After me, you shall come upon all-embracing humility, severing swords, and mortification that the wrongdoers will apply to you as a custom. Then, your congregations will be dispersed, your eyes will weep, and you will very soon hope if you would see and support me. Very soon will you all know the truth of what I am saying to you, and Allah will take far away only those who commit wrongdoings and sins.

The Imam (‘a) became bored of the community to the degree that he wished for death. He frequently repeated this statement:

When will the most wretched be sent?

It is reported that Imam Ali (‘a) said on the pulpit,

What prevents the most wretched person of the community from dyeing this beard with blood from above it?

It is also reported that Imam Ali (‘a) preached in the month in which he was killed and said,

*The month of Ramadan has come to you. It is the lord of the months, and foremost of the year. In it, the mill of authority makes a new turn and you will make the pilgrimage of the new year in one rank without an Imam to lead you. The sign of that will be that I will no longer be among you.*10

Abu-Salih, a narrator, says, ‘I saw Ali (‘a) putting a copy of the Holy Quran on the head and saying this supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, I did ask them to apply to themselves what is written in this Book, but they did not respond to me. O Allah, I am now bored with them and they are bored with me. I now hate them and they hate me, and they are forcing me to do what is in violation of my manners. So, please choose for me what is better than they are, and choose for them one who is worse than I am, and please make their hearts melt as same as salt melts in water. 11

Almighty Allah responded to the supplication of Imam Ali (‘a) and took him to the Court of Sacredness with the prophets, veracious people, and martyrs, disburdening him from that community of ill faith and ill ideas.

- 1. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 1:200.
- 2. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Al-Thaqafi, Al-Gharat 1:31.
- 3. Al-Daynawari, Al-Akhbar Al-Tiwal, pp. 156.
- 4. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 68.
- 5. Tarikh Abi’l-Fida' 1:180.
- 6. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 25.
- 7. Muhammad Baqir Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa’adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:546.
- 8. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 27.
- 9. Muhammad Baqir Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa’adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:537.
- 10. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad, pp. 12.
- 11. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 1:200.

The Deputy Governors In Imam ‘Ali’s Government

Through its political legislations and administrational rules, Islam has paid very much attention to the development of the country in such fields like agriculture and industry, the protection of the citizens from disease and poverty, the equality of job opportunities, and the procuring of all necessities of life.

Of course, the establishment of a society that is balanced in behavior, security, and luxury depends mainly on the machinery of government, because the ruling authorities are responsible for creating the activities that contribute to the advancement of the country and the flourishing of life therein.

In the view of Islam, the responsibilities of the government must not be restricted to a certain aspect of the citizens’ lives; rather, it must include all aspects and fields of life, one of which is to work towards achieving luxury and welfare of the community through procuring labor opportunities and eradicating unemployment, which is in fact a major source of crime in every community.

Another duty that must be carried out by the ruling authorities is strict supervision over the market in order to ban such economical diseases like monopoly and to remove the spoiled stocks that affect badly the public health.

A Muslim government is required to act as the vigilant eye that has full acquaintance with the affairs and concerns of the community. It is thus required in the least to spread knowledge and eradicate illiteracy, because any nation that sinks in ignorance will never be able to occupy any honorable position on the globe.

Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a), the father of social justice in Islam, adopted positively the affairs of the governmental employees, including the deputy governors, the functionaries, and the tax col-

lectors and supervised their activities to the utmost scope. He thus would not entrust a governmental office to anybody before he investigated his decency, honesty, experience, and sincerity. This was in fact one of the most important political programs of the Imam (‘a).

Strictly and rigorously, Imam Ali (‘a) stood against Talhah and Al-Zubayr when they asked him to commission them to senior offices in the state, because he knew for sure that these two persons would misappropriate the public treasury and would treat the subjects unfairly, making use of such authority for their personal interests.

In the sight of Imam Ali (‘a), authority must be used as a means of social reformation and as a reason for achieving the intellectual and economical rise of the community so that Muslims would be saved from the woes of ignorance, disease, and poverty.

He (S) thus insisted on his deputy governors to pay very much interest to the cultivation of lands and the increase of the individual incomes, warning them against putting the collection of taxes that are imposed on the peasants and other social classes as their one and only goal; lest, the country would not witness any economical recovery, the public life would not see bloom, and the Muslim community would not experience luxury.

Imam Ali (‘a) also adopted the policy of strict and continuous supervision over the policies and behaviors of his officials; therefore, he would praise, honor, and pay tribute to the sincere governors who did their jobs perfectly away from any desire to rule over people.

On the other hand, he would immediately depose any governor who was proved to have deviated from proper behavior and betrayed his position. As for those whom were proved to have misappropriated the public treasury, the Imam (‘a) would execute the religious penal laws of larceny on them. He did this with Ali ibn Al-Jahm when he stole the central public treasury.

A deep look into the epistles and instructions of Imam Ali (‘a) to his officials and deputy governors demonstrates that these instructions represent a variety of colors of justice, components of honorable life, and sorts of equality. They also act as brilliant programs that represent the broadmindedness of Islam as well as its perfect treatment of all aspects of political life. These treatments are not subjected to the traditional effects; rather, they all are formed to protect man from any assault and to supply him with all of his rights perfectly.

Despite all of its experiments and systems of rule, humanity could not establish a system that guarantees human rights and goes along with the life demands like the system that was established by Imam Ali (‘a) through his epistles and instructions to his deputy governors and officials.

For instance, no Muslim ruler or leader could ever found any political document that is full of systems of authority and administration and encompassing all human rights and duties towards the ruling system like the golden document that Imam Ali (‘a) wrote to Malik Al-Ashtar when he entrusted him with the deputy governorship of Egypt and ordered him to apply the articles of this document to the people under his rule.

Another example of Imam Ali’s strict supervision over the behaviors and affairs of his deputy governors is that when he was informed that ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf, his deputy governor of Al-Basrah, was invited to a banquet, the Imam (‘a) sent him an epistle to deny this act, because the Imam (‘a) wanted their deputy governors to act as honestly and decently as possible and to be far away from any sort of seduction.

In brief, Imam Ali (‘a) adopted all the noble goals that achieve prosperity for Muslims and legislated the most wonderful laws and regulations in the field of administration. In fact, these laws and regulations must be studied objectively and comprehensively so that Muslims may benefit from them, follow their course, and provide them as an object of pride.

In the following lines, we will shed light on the affairs of the governmental officials in the reign of Imam Ali (‘a) as well as the obligations and responsibilities that his epistles to them demonstrated.

Responsibilities And Significance Of Deputy Governors

The position of a governor is one of the most sensitive offices in the Islamic system of rule. If this position is carried out properly, the governor will be saved from the chastisement of Almighty Allah, but if the otherwise, the governor will be exposed to punishment in this world and the other world. Referring to this fact, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, **‘Any ruler who will come to rule over Muslims after me will be put on the edge of the Discriminating Bridge (between Paradise and Hellfire) and the angels will open the record of his deeds. If he is proved fair, Allah will save him due to his justice, but if he is proved unjust, the Discriminating Bridge will shake under his feet so disturbingly that his limbs will be separated. He will then fall into the Fire and the first organs of him that will feel the heat of the fire will be his nose and his cheeks.’** 1

The Holy Prophet (S) is also reported to have described authority as follows:

The first of holding a position of authority is blame, the second is regret, and the third is chastisement on the Resurrection Day. Excepted are only those who rule with justice. However, how can one rule with justice with his relatives? 2

On another occasion, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

You will care very much for the positions of authority and then this will result in remorse and regret on the Resurrection Day. Excellent is the suckling and poor is the weanling.[3]

Foundations Of Selecting The Deputy Governors

One of the exclusive responsibilities of the head of a government is to select and appoint the persons who would be entrusted with offices of deputy governorship. In fact, such persons must be qualified enough for holding this position, and some of these qualifications are

(1) Truthfulness,
(2) Fulfillment of promises and pledges,
(3) Restoring the trusts to their owners,
(4) Evasion of any sort of betrayal,
(5) Nice wording and good mannerism with the subjects,
(6) Compassion and kindness to the orphans while sponsoring their affairs,
(7) Adequate familiarity with the laws of Islam,
(8) Self-control and capability of suppressing rage, and
(9) Kind treatment with the subjects.[4]

Punishment Of The Unjust Governor

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

The evilest of all people is the unjust ruler who strays off and makes others stray off the right path. He thus does away with a tradition that has been followed, and gives rise to an innovative matter that has been abandoned. I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, **'The unjust ruler shall be brought, having no support and no apology to be excused, and thrown in Hellfire where he revolves like the revolving of hand mill. He then sticks to the bottom of Hellfire.'** [5]

Distancing From The Unjust Rulers

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

Keep yourself away from the unjust ruler and do not secure yourself against the trickeries of Satan by repeating such mere words like, ‘I deny! I refuse!’ Verily, those who existed before you exposed themselves to perdition by repeating the same words.

If you insist on fondness of worldly pleasures and proximity to the rulers and your self leads you to a path other than the path of your prosperity, then you may at least control your tongue, because at situations of rage, nothing prevents from death. Do not investigate the affairs of the unjust rulers, do not divulge their secrets, and do not make yourself a place among them. 6

Rule Of The Foolish

The Holy Prophet (S) warned against the rule of the foolish people who lack any amount of awareness and piety. He (S) is thus reported to have said to Ka’b,

May Allah protect you from the rule of the foolish’ They are rulers who will rule after me. They neither follow my true guidance nor pattern after my practices. Whoever gives credence to their untruths and helps them oppress people, does not belong to me and I do not belong to him, and he will not be allowed to approach my Divine Pond.

Conversely, whoever does not believe their lies and does not help them oppress people, is part of me and I am part of him, and he will be allowed to approach my Pond. 7

The Addicted to Authority

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to a man who requested him for a senior office,

We do not entrust people who desire for authority with our offices.8

Duties Of The Deputy Governors

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

A deputy governor is required to take charge of his affairs and to take care of his assistants so that the good deed of a good-doer and the evil deed of an evil-doer will not be concealed from him. He is then required not to leave both of these unrewarded and unpunished, because if he leaves them, the good-doer will be too reluctant to do more good deeds and the evil-doers will be encouraged to do more evil doings, causing the whole matter to be corrupted and the whole work to be wasted. 9

Teachings Of Imam Ali To The Deputy Governors

In his famous epistle to Malik Al-Ashtar, Imam Ali ('a) sketched a number of responsibilities the deputy governors must attend with regard to doing their jobs. Some of these responsibilities will be cited in the following points:

1) A deputy governor is responsible for showing mercy and compassion to the subjects and making no distinction between them. He must not act as a ferocious beast whose one and only concern is to misappropriate the sustenance of people and rob their economical resources.

Imam Ali ('a) thus says,

Habituate your heart to mercy for the subjects and to affection and kindness for them. Do not stand over them like greedy beasts who feel it is enough to devour them, since they are of two kinds, either your brother in religion or one like you in creation.

2) A deputy governor must not use authority as a means of arrogance and insolence, because arrogance corrupts one's faith. To get rid of arrogance, one must always consider the greatness and omnipotence of Almighty Allah.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

Do not say, 'I have been given authority, I should be obeyed when I order,' because it engenders confusion in the heart, weakens the religion, and takes one near ruin. If the authority in which you are placed produces pride or vanity in you, then look at the greatness of the realm of Allah over you and His might the like of which might you do not even possess over yourself. This will curb your haughtiness, cure you of your high temper, and bring back to you your wisdom, which had gone away from you.

Beware of comparing yourself to Allah in His greatness or likening yourself to Him in His power, for Allah humiliates every claimant of power and disgraces every one who is haughty.

3) A deputy governor is required to act justly for the sake of Almighty Allah and to do justice to people.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

Do justice for Allah and do justice towards the people, as against yourself, your near ones, and those of your subjects for whom you have a liking, because if you do not do so, you will be oppressive, and when a person oppresses the creatures of Allah, then, instead of His creatures, Allah becomes his opponent, and when Allah is the opponent of a person, He tramples his plea; and he will remain in the position of being at war with Allah until he gives it up and repents.

Nothing is more inductive of the reversal of Allah's bounty or for the hastening of His retribution than continuance in oppression, because Allah hears the prayer of the oppressed and is on the look out for the oppressors.

4) A deputy governor is required to attend to the ordinary people, respond to their demands, carry out their desires, and try to cover up their faults, because they are regarded as the power of the state and the defense against the enemies.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

The way most coveted by you should be that which is the most equitable for the truth, the most universal by way of justice, and the most comprehensive with regard to the agreement among those under you, because the disagreement among the common people sweeps away the arguments of the chiefs can be disregarded when compared with the agreement of the common people.

No one among those under you is more burdensome to the ruler in the comfort of life, less helpful in distress, more disliking of equitable treatment, more tricky in asking favors, less thankful at the time of giving, less appreciative of reasons at the time of refusal, and weaker in endurance at the time of the discomforts of life than the chiefs.

It is the common people of the community who are the pillars of the religion, the power of the Muslims, and the defense against the enemies. Your leanings should therefore be towards them and your inclination with them.

5) A deputy governor must honor the righteous citizens and must not equate them to the wrong-doers. He must also act nicely towards the subjects and try to alleviate their burdens.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

The virtuous and the vicious should not be in equal position before you, because this means dissuasion of the virtuous from virtue and persuasion

of the vicious to vice. Keep everyone in the position, which is his. You should know that the most conducive thing for the good impression of the ruler on his subjects is that he should extend good behavior towards them, lighten their hardships, and avoid putting them to unbearable troubles.

You should therefore, in this way, follow a course by which you will leave a good impression with your subjects, because such good ideas will relieve you of great worries. Certainly, the most appropriate for good impression of you is he to whom your behavior has not been good.

6) A deputy governor must keep alive all righteous traditions and must execute the laws that bring benefits to the publics.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

Do not discontinue the good lives in which the earlier people of this community had been acting, by virtue of which there was general unity and through which the subjects prospered. Do not innovate any line of action, which injures these earlier ways because in that case, the reward for those who had established those ways will continue, but the burden for discontinuing them will be on you.

Keep on increasing your conversations with the scholars and discussions with the wise to stabilize the prosperity of the areas under you, and to continue with that in which the earlier people had remained steadfast.

7) A deputy governor is required to judge between people according to the Holy Quran and the Prophetic traditions, because the answers to all questions can be found in these two sources of legislation.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

Refer to Allah and His Prophet the affairs that worry you and matters that appear confusing to you, because, addressing the people whom Allah the Sublime wishes to guide, He said, 'O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Prophet and those vested with authority from among you; and

then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Prophet if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day.'

Referring to Allah means to act according to what is clear in His Book and referring to the Prophet means to follow his unanimously agreed traditions concerning which there are no differences.

8) A deputy governor must appoint for judging between people the best of judges who are broad minded enough to listen to the litigants, who are not enraged when people quarrel in their presence, who do not persist in wrong when they recognize the truth afterwards, who are not drifted by personal greed, who are too decent to follow their personal whims, who study carefully all the issues that are provided before them, who take enough time before they indulge in spurious issues, who are not bored with the frequent questions of people, who are strict enough to support the right against the wrong, and who are not affected by any word of praise or flattery.

A deputy governor is also required to supervise the judges and be acquainted with their verdicts lest they be in violation of the truth. He is also required to specify good salaries for the judges in order to prevent them from even thinking of receiving bribes, and to praise them frequently so that they will feel dignity and respect.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

For the settlement of disputes among people, select him who is the most distinguished of your subjects in your view. The cases coming before him should not vex him, disputation should not enrage him, he should not insist on any wrong point, and should not grudge accepting the truth when he perceives it; he should not lean towards greed and should not content himself with a cursory understanding of a matter without going thoroughly into it.

He should be most ready to stop to ponder on doubtful points, most regardful of arguments, least disgusted at the quarrel of litigants, most patient at probing into matters, and most fearless at the time of passing

judgment. Praise should not make him vain and elation should not make him lean to any side. Such people are very few.

Then, very often check his decisions and allow him so much money as remuneration that he has no excuse worth hearing for not being honest and there remains no occasion for him to go to others for his needs.

Give him that rank in your audience for which no one else among your chiefs aspires, so that he remains safe from the harm of those around you. You should have a piercing eye in this matter, because this religion has formerly been a prisoner in the hands of vicious persons when action was taken according to passion and worldly wealth was sought.

9) A deputy governor must not give any office to anybody before he checks and puts him to the test in order to realize the scope of his decency and sincerity. An office must not be given to someone on the strength of favoritism or nepotism, because this act is considered betrayal. Each office must be given to the most experienced in its field.

Qualifications like diffidence, modesty, and nobility are necessarily found in the persons to be commissioned to offices so that they will serve people and will not exceed the truth. The governmental officials must be given salaries that cover their needs so that they will not turn to others or seize the others' financial dues.

At the same time, they must be put under strict supervision in order to evaluate their conducts. When they are found negligent, they must be then deposed and libeled openly so that others will learn lessons from them.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

Thereafter, look into the affairs of your executives. Give them appointment after tests and do not appoint them according to partiality or favoritism, because these two things constitute sources of injustice and unfairness.

Select among them those who are people of experience and modesty, hailing from virtuous houses, having been previously in Islam, because such persons possess high manners and untarnished honor. They are the least inclined towards greed and they always have their eyes on the ends of matters.

Give them an abundant livelihood by way of salary, because this gives them the strength to maintain themselves in order not to have an eye upon the funds in their custody, and it would be an argument against them if they disobeyed your orders or misappropriated your trust. You should also check their activities and have people who report on them who should be truthful and faithful, because your watching their actions secretly will urge them to preserve trust with and to be kind to the people.

Be careful of assistants. If any one of them extends his hands towards misappropriation and the reports of your reporters reaching you confirm it, this should be regarded enough evidence. You should then inflict corporal punishment on him and recover what he has misappropriated. You should put him in a place of disgrace, blacklist him with the charge of misappropriation, and make him wear the necklace of shame for his offence.

10) The secretaries appointed by a deputy governor must be highly trustworthy, faithful, and experienced. As they will look into the secrets of the State, they must be honest and they must not divulge these secrets to anyone. They are also required to be too well-mannered and polite to have the dare to violate the instructions of the governor or to defy him.

They must also provide the documents and formal articles before the deputy governor without delay and must not neglect answering the letters as accurately as possible. They must register whatever they receive and whatever they deliver. The criterion for choosing such secretaries must be their conduct before holding this office.

The Imam (‘a) thus says,

Then you should take care of your secretarial workers. Put the best of them in charge of your affairs. Entrust those of your letters, which contain your policies and secrets, to him who possesses the best character, who is not elated by honors, lest he dares speak against you in common audiences.

He should also not be negligent in presenting the communications of your officers before you and issuing correct replies to them on your behalf and in matters of your receipts and payments. He should not make any damaging agreement on your behalf and should not fail in repudiating an agreement against you.

He should not be ignorant of the extent of his own position in matters, because he who is ignorant of his own position is even more ignorant of the position of others.

Your selection of these people should not be on the basis of your understanding of them, confidence, and your good impression, because people catch the ideas of the officers through affectation and personal service and there is nothing in it which is like well-wishing or trustfulness. You should rather test them by what they did under the virtuous people before you.

Take a decision in favor of one who has a good name among the common people and is the most renowned in trustworthiness, because this will be a proof of your regard for Allah and for him on whose behalf you have been appointed to this position (namely your Imam). Establish one chief for every department of work. He should not be incapable of big matters, and a rush of work should not perplex him. Whenever there is a defect in your secretaries, which you overlook, then you will be held responsible for it.

11) A deputy governor must fix a time for the citizens during which he meets them, has an idea about their problems, and listens to their complaints. A deputy governor is also required to sit in a modest position free from any aspect of arrogance or grandeur. The citizens must be given the freedom to express their concerns away from the guards and officials of the governor, and

when they use violent words or coarse manners, the governor must stand it peacefully, because a governor is required to be permissive enough to receive the subjects warmly.

Any bestowal of the governor must be given kindly, but not haughtily, and he is also required to use nice words of apology when he intends to prevent someone from something. Delaying response to the citizens is not recommended for the deputy governors; therefore, they must respond to the demands as soon as possible.

The Imam ('a) says,

Fix a time for complainants wherein you make yourself free for them, and sit for them in common audience and feel humble therein for the sake of Allah who created you. On that occasion, you should keep away your army and your assistants such as the guards and the police so that anyone who likes to speak may speak to you without fear, because I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying in more than one place, **'The people among whom the right of the weak is not secured from the strong without fear will never achieve purity.'**

Tolerate their awkwardness and inability to speak. Keep away from you narrowness and haughtiness; Allah would, on this account, spread over you the skirts of His mercy and assign the reward of obedience to Him for you. Whatever you give, give it joyfully, but when you refuse, do it handsomely and with excuses.

Then, there are certain matters, which you cannot avoid performing yourself. For example, replying to your officers when your secretaries are unable to do so, or disposing of the complaints of the people when your assistants shirk them. Finish every day the work meant for it, because every day has its own work.

Keep for yourself the better and greater portion of these periods for the worship of Allah, although all these items are for Allah provided the intention is pure and the subjects prosper thereby.

12) A deputy governor is required to perform the obligatory devotional acts purely, sincerely, and perfectly and to lead moderate congregational prayers, because some people are not strong enough to endure long prayers.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

The particular thing by which you should purify your religion for Allah should be the fulfillment of those obligations, which are especially for Him. Therefore, devote to Allah some of your physical activity during the night and the day and whatever worship you perform for seeking nearness to Allah should be complete, without defect or deficiency, whatsoever physical exertion it may involve.

When you lead the prayers for the people, it should be neither too long as to be boring nor too short as to be wasteful, because among the people there are the sick as well as those who have needs of their own.

When the Messenger of Allah (S) sent me to Yemen, I enquired how I should offer prayers with them. He (S) replied, **'Perform the prayers as the weakest of them can perform, and be considerate to the believers.'**

13) A deputy governor must not keep himself away from the subjects, because this leads to ignorance about their affairs, makes them confuse the good with the bad and stop complaining to the governor about their problems. In fact, the complaints of people will never harm the governor, because in such complaints they either record a wrongdoing that afflicted them or request for justice and fairness.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

Then, do not keep yourself secluded from the people for a long time, because the seclusion of those in authority from the subjects is a kind of narrow-sightedness and it causes ignorance about their affairs. Seclusion from them also prevents them from the knowledge of those things which they do not know and as a result they begin to regard big matters as

small and small matters as big, good matters as bad and bad matters as good, while the truth becomes confused with falsehood.

After all, a governor is a human being and he cannot have knowledge of things which people keep hidden from him.No writ is big on the face of truth to differentiate its various expressions from falsehood. Then, you can be one of two kinds of men: either you may be generous in granting rights and then why this hiding in spite of your discharging the obligations and good acts that you perform, or you are a victim of stinginess; in that case people will soon give up asking you since they will lose hope of generous treatment from you.

In spite of that, there are many needs of the people towards you, which do not involve any hardship on you, such as the complaint against oppression or the request for justice in a matter.

Further, a governor has favorites and people of easy access to him. They misappropriate things, they are high-handed, and they do not observe justice in matters. You should destroy the root of evil in the people by cutting away the causes of these defects. Do not make any land grants to your hangers on or supporters.

They should not expect from you the possession of land, which may cause harm to adjoining people over the question of irrigation or common services whose burden the grantees place on others. In this way, the benefit will be rather theirs than yours, and the blame will lie on you in this world and the next.

14) A deputy governor is required to commit himself to the truth and to apply it to the close and the remote people equally, even if this would be too heavy for him to bear.

The Imam (‘a) thus says,

Allow rights to whomsoever it is due, whether near you or far from you. In this matter, you should be enduring and watchful even though it may involve your relations and favorites, and keep in view the reward of that which appears burdensome on you, because its reward is handsome.

15) When the subjects suspect a deed of the governor, he is then required to make his apologies and clarify the reasons that made him do that deed.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

If the subjects suspect you of high-handedness, explain to them your position openly and remove their suspicion with your explanation, because this would mean exercise for your soul and consideration to the subjects while this explanation will secure your aim of keeping them firm in truth.

16) A deputy governor must never establish his rule on bloodshed, because this will contribute greatly to the weakening and vanishing of the rule. Besides, bloodshed is never excused by Almighty Allah unless it is made according to the law of Islam in such states like self-defense or protection of the subjects.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

You should avoid shedding blood without justification, because nothing is more inviting of Divine retribution, greater in evil consequence, and more effective in the decline of prosperity and cutting short of life than the shedding of blood without justification. On the Day of Judgment, Allah the Glorified would commence giving His judgment among the people with the cases of bloodshed committed by them.

Therefore, do not strengthen your authority by shedding prohibited blood, because this will weaken and lower the authority, moreover destroy it and shift it. You cannot offer any excuse before Allah or before me for willful killing, because there must be the question or revenge in it.

If you are involved in it be error and you exceed in the use of your whip or sword, or are hard in inflicting punishment, as sometimes even a blow by the fist or a smaller stroke causes death, then the haughtiness of your authority should not prevent you from paying the blood price to the successors of the killed person.

17) A deputy governor is required to release himself from any sign of self- conceit, which eventually leads to great evil. He is also warned against fondness of praise and commendation for the services he may make to the country, since it is his duty to serve the people and the country. A deputy governor is also required not to break any promise he has made to the subjects.

Imam Ali ('a) thus says,

You should avoid self-admiration, having reliance in what appears good in yourself, and love of exaggerated praise, because this is one of the most reliable opportunities for Satan to obliterate the good deeds of the virtuous. Avoid showing the existence of obligation on your subjects for having done good deed to them or praising your own actions or making promises and then breaking them, because showing the existence of obligation destroys the good deed, self-praise takes away the light of truth, and breaking promises earns the hatred of Allah and of the people. Allah the Glorified says **,**

'Most hateful is it unto Allah that you say what you yourselves do it not.'(4:29)

18) Haste is not recommended for deputy governors, because it results in failure and disappointment. On the other hand, deliberation is the key to every success. A deputy governor is also warned against taking for himself exclusively a thing that all people must possess equally.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

Avoid haste in matters before their time, slowness at their proper time, insistence on them when the propriety of action is not known, or weakens when it becomes clear. Assign every matter its proper place and do every job at the appropriate time. Do not appropriate to yourself that in which the people have an equal share, nor be regardless of matters, which have come to light with the excuse that you are accountable for others.

Shortly, the curtains of all matters will be raised from your view and you will be required to render redress to the oppressed. Have control over your sense of prestige, any outburst of anger, the might of your arm, and the sharpness of your tongue. Guard against all this by avoiding haste and by delaying severe action until your anger subsides and you gain your self- control. You cannot withhold yourself from this unless you bear in mind that you have to return to Allah.

19) A deputy governor is warned against the consultants when they commit such discommended acts like finding faults with people in order to find themselves a place near the governor. The talebearers who inform against the subjects must not find themselves any place near the governor. The miserly, the coward, the greedy, and the people who have earlier worked as assistants of tyrannical rulers must be prevented from coming close to the governors.

The Imam ('a) thus says,

The one among the people under you who is furthest from you and the worst of them in your view should be he who is the most inquisitive of the shortcomings of the people, because people do have shortcomings and the ruler is the most appropriate person to cover them. Do not disclose whatever of it is hidden from you because your obligation is to correct what is manifest to you, while Allah will deal with whatever is hidden from you.

Therefore, cover shortcomings so far as you can; Allah would cover those of your shortcomings, which you should like to remain under cover from your subjects. Unfasten every knot of hatred in the people and cut away from yourself the cause of every enmity. Feign ignorance from what is not clear to you. Do not hasten to second a backbiter, because a backbiter is a cheat although he looks like those who wish well.

Ministry Of Complaints

Imam Ali (‘a) was the first ruler to establish a ministry for studying the complaints of the subjects. At Al-Kufah, he built a house which he called **bayt Al-mazalim** (*House of Complaints*) and instructed the wronged people to register their issues at that house. However, this ministry was developed during the reign of the ‘Abbasid dynasty to exceed the office of judicature.

Imam Ali (‘a) established this ministry to run all of the affairs that are related to the complaints of the subjects, such as:

- Studying the complaints that the subjects provide against the governors and governmental officials,

- investigating the unjust actions of the tax collectors who misappropriate the funds of the alms and financial duties,

- supervising the performance of the clerks and secretaries who are commissioned to run the public treasuries,

- studying the complaints of the mercenaries and the officials when they are not paid their salaries,

- confiscating the funds robbed by the embezzlers and giving them back to their beneficiaries,

- supervising the public and private endowments in order to make sure that they have been used properly,

- executing the judgments of the judges and inspectors of weights and measures when they are suspended illegally,

- Observance of establishing the religious rituals and the congregational devotional acts, such as the Friday Prayers and the Feast Prayers, and

- imposing disciplinary punishments on the employees and officials who commit mistakes deliberately or neglect doing their jobs.

Tax Collectors

The tax collectors are classified into two categories: The tribute collectors and the alms collectors.

The tribue collectors are those governmental officials whose job is to collect the funds that are imposed as tributes on the lands that were conquered by Muslims by force.

The alms collectors are those officials whose job is to collect the funds that are imposed on the properties that are subjected to the religious tax of zakat, such as the four yields (wheat, barley, dates, and raisins), the three cattle (camels, cows, and sheep), and the two coins (golden coins and silver coins), according to the laws of Islam.

About the moral standards that such collectors are required to observe, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Move on with the fear of Allah Who is One and Who has no partner. Do not frighten any Muslim. Do not pass over his lands so as to make him feel unhappy. Do not take from him more than Allah's share in his property. When you go to a tribe, you should get down at their watering place instead of entering their houses.

Then, proceed towards them with peace and dignity until you stand among them. Then, salute them and do not be remiss in greeting them. Then, say to them, 'O servants of Allah, the vicegerent and representative (i.e. caliph) of Allah has sent me to you to collect from you Allah's share in your properties. Is there anything of His share in your properties? If so, give it to His vicegerent.'

If someone among them says, 'No,' then do not repeat the demand. If someone speaks to you in the affirmative, then go with him without frightening, threatening, pressuring, or oppressing him. Take what he gives you such as gold or silver coins.

If he has cattle or camels, do not enter upon them save with his permission, because their major part is his. Therefore, when you get there, do not enter upon them like one who has full control over them or in a violent manner. Do not scare any animal, do not tease anyone, and do not let the owner feel grieved about anyone.

Divide the property into two parts and let the owner choose one. When he has chosen, do not object to it. Then, divide the remaining into two parts and let him choose one; and when he has chosen, do not raise any objection. Continue like this until only the quantity, which is enough to satisfy Allah's dues, remains. Then, take Allah's due from it.

If he disputes your action, allow his views, then mix the two separated parts and repeat what you had done before until you take Allah's due from his property. Do not take an old, decrepit broken-limbed, sick or unsound animal. Do not entrust the animals for custody except to one whom you trust to take care of Muslims' property until he hands it over to their chief who will distribute it.

Do not entrust it to anyone except he who is a well-wisher, God-fearing, trustworthy, and watchful, and who is not harsh on Muslims' property, nor makes them run too much, nor tires them, nor labors them. Then, send to us all that you have collected and we shall deal with it as Allah has ordered.

When your trustee takes over the animal, tell him that he should not separate the she-camel from its young and should not milk all its milk because that would affect its young, and also that he should not exert it in riding. In this matter, he should behave justly between it and all its companions. He should allow rest to camels that are tired, and drive with ease those whose hoofs have been rubbed off.

When you pass a water spring, stay the camels there for drinking and do not take them away from vegetated land to barren paths. You should allow them rest now and then and give them time near water and grass. In this way, when they reach us by leave of Allah, they will be fat with plenty of marrow and would not be fatigued or distressed. We will then distribute them according to the commands of the Book of Allah and the

traditions of His Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny). Certainly, this will be a great source of reward for you and a means to secure guidance, if Allah so wills. 10

Interrogating And Calling The Governors To Account

Imam Ali ('a) used to lay strict supervision on the deputy governors and officials of his government. Once he discovered any item of disloyalty in their work, he would immediately depose them. He ('a) was once informed that one of his tax collectors had misappropriated an amount of the funds that were the dues of Muslims. He therefore wrote the following letter to him:

*Now, I have come to know such a thing about you that if you have done so, then you have displeased your Lord, disobeyed your Imam, and betrayed your trust. I have come to know that you have razed the ground and taken away whatever was under your feet and devoured whatever was in your hands. Send me your account and know that the accounting to Allah will be severer than that to the people; and that is an end to the matter.*11

Dismissal And Discharge Of Governors

It is illegal to dismiss a deputy governor as long as he carries out his duties properly and commits himself to the instructions of the ruler. However, when a deputy governor commits a wrongdoing or deviates from the straight path, he must be then deposed of his office and brought to trial.

Sawdah the daughter of Imarah, a lady from the tribe of Hamdan, complained to Imam Ali ('a) about the oppressive acts that one of

his deputy governors had committed. The Imam (‘a) immediately deposed that governor from his office, wept heavily, and said,

O Allah, You are the witness on them and me; I have never ordered them to oppress any of Your creatures or to neglect any of their duties towards You. 12

When the Imam (‘a) was informed that Al-Mundhir had contradicted the conducts of his father Al-Jarud who was well-known for his piety and righteousness, he wrote to him the following letter:

Now, the good behavior of your father deceived me about you and I thought that you would follow his way and tread in his path. But according to what has reached me about you, you are not giving up following your passions and are not retaining any provision for the next world. You are making this world by ruining your next life, and doing good deeds to your kinsmen by cutting yourself off from religion.

If what has reached me about you is correct, then the camel of your family and the strap of your shoe are better than yourself. A man with qualities like yours is not fit to close a hole in the ground, nor for performing any deed, nor for increasing his position, nor for taking him as a partner in any trust, nor for trusting him against misappropriation. Therefore, proceed to me as soon as this letter of mine reaches you if Allah so wills. 13

The Armed Forces

The armed forces are the protective shield of the community, the defenders against assaults and invasions, and the best organs of the government. About the armed forces, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Now the army is, by the will of Allah, the fortress of the subjects, the ornament of the ruler, the strength of the religion, and the means of peace. The subjects cannot exist without them while the army can be maintained only by the funds fixed by Allah in the revenues, through which

they acquire the strength to fight the enemies, on which they depend for their prosperity, and with which they meet their needs.

These two classes cannot exist without the third class namely the judges, the executives and the secretaries who pass judgments about contracts, collect revenues, and who are depended upon in special and general matters.

Put in command of your forces the man who in your view is the best well- wisher of Allah, His Prophet, and your Imam. The most virtuous of them in heart and the highest of them in endurance is he who is slow in being enraged, who accepts excuses, who is kind to the weak, and who is strict with the strong; violence should not raise his temper and weakness should not keep him sitting.

Also, associate with considerate people from high families, virtuous houses, and decent traditions, then people of courage, valor, generosity, and benevolence, because they are repositories of honor and springs of virtues. Strive for their matters as the parents strive for their child.

Do not regard anything that you do to strengthen them as big nor consider anything that you have agreed to do for them as little so as to give it up, even though it may be small, because this will make them your well- wishers and create a good impression of you. Do not neglect to attend to their small matters, confining yourself to their important matters, because your small favors will also be of benefit to them while the important ones are such that they cannot ignore them.

That commander of the army should have such a position before you that he renders help to them equitably and spends from his money on them and on those of their families who remain behind so that all their worries converge on the one worry for fighting the enemy. Your kindness to them will turn their hearts to you.
The most pleasant thing for the rulers is the establishment of justice in their areas and the manifestation of the love of their subjects, but the subjects' love manifests itself only when their hearts are clean. Their good wishes prove *correct only when they surround their commanders to protect them.*

Do not regard their positions to be a burden over them and do not keep watching for the end of their tenure. Therefore, be broadminded with regard to their desires, continue praising them and recounting the good deeds of those who have shown such deeds, because the mention of good actions shakes the brave and rouses the weak, if Allah so wills.

Appreciate the performance of every one of them, do not attribute the performance of one to the other, and do not minimize the reward below the level of the performance. The high position of a man should not lead you to regard his small deeds as big, nor should the low position of a man make you regard his big deeds as small.

Police Forces

Imam Ali ('a) was the first man in Islam to establish the police forces, which are considered one of the most sensitive organs of government. Giving them the name of *shurtat Al-khamis* (i.e. the military police), the Imam ('a) selected a group of the most virtuous soldiers who were characterized by high levels of decency and piety that the testimony of one of them was regarded as the testimony of two ordinary men.

Among these elite soldiers were the martyr Habib ibn Musahir Al-Asadi and Abdullah ibn Yahya Al-Hadrami to whom Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

O Abdullah! Have these good tidings! Truly, the Messenger of Allah (S) had mentioned your father's and your name within the list of the military police.

The military police force was charged with many duties and responsibilities like arresting the criminals, adopting protective measures to prevent crimes, maintaining the public order and security, and safeguarding the people's properties and prestige.

The Imam ('a) also restricted the authorities of the police officers who were thus not allowed to arrest any person before it was

proved that he had committed an offense that lied under the penal law of the Islamic legislation. Besides, if the police officers committed any violation, they would be brought before the court and exposed to the punishments decided by the Islamic code of religious law. 14

The Duties Of The Ruler And The Subjects Towards Each Other

In his discourse about the reciprocal duties of the ruler and the subjects towards each other, Imam Ali ('a) says,

So now, Allah the Glorified has, by placing me over your affairs, created my right over you and you too have a right over me like mine over you. A right is very vast in description but very narrow in equitability of action. It does not accrue to any person unless it accrues against him also, and right does not accrue against a person unless it also accrues in his favor.

If there is any right which is only in favor of a person with no corresponding right accruing against him, it is solely for Allah the Glorified and not for His creatures by virtue of His might over His creatures and by virtue of the justice permeating all His decrees.

Of course, He the Glorified has created His right over creatures that they should worship Him and has laid upon Himself the obligation of their reward equal to several times the recompense as a mark of His bounty and the generosity that He is capable of.

Then, from His rights, He the Glorified created certain rights for certain people against others. He made them so as to equate with one another. Some of these rights produce other rights. Some rights are such that they do not accrue except with others. The greatest of these rights that Allah the Glorified has made obligatory is the right of the ruler over the ruled and the right of the ruled over the ruler.

This is an obligation which Allah the Glorified has placed on each other. He has made it the basis of their mutual affection, and an honor for their religion. Consequently, the ruled cannot prosper unless the rulers are sound, while the rulers cannot be sound unless the ruled are steadfast.

If the ruled fulfill the rights of the ruler and the ruler fulfills their rights, then right attains the position of honor among them, the ways of religion become established, signs of justice become fixed, and the Prophetic traditions gain currency.

In this way, time will improve, the continuance of government will be expected, and the aims of the enemies will be frustrated. But if the ruled gain sway over the ruler, or the ruler oppresses the ruled, then difference crops up in every word, signs of oppression appear, mischief enters religion, and the ways of the Prophetic traditions are forsaken.

Then desires are acted upon, the commands of religion are discarded, diseases of the spirit become numerous, and there is no hesitation in disregarding even great rights, or in committing big wrongs. In such circumstances, the virtuous are humiliated while the vicious are honored, and there are serious chastisements from Allah the Glorified onto the people.

You should therefore counsel each other for the fulfillment of your obligations and cooperate with each other. However extremely eager a person may be to secure the pleasure of Allah, and however fully he strives for it, he cannot discharge his obligation for obedience to Allah the Glorified as is really due to Him, and it is an obligatory right of Allah over the people that they should advise each other to the best of their ability and cooperate with each other for the establishment of truth among them.

No person, however great his position in the matter of truth, and however advanced his distinction in religion may be, is above cooperation in connection with the obligations placed on him by Allah. Again, no man, however small he may be regarded by others, and however humble he may appear before eyes, is too low to cooperate or to be afforded cooperation in this matter.

Imam Ali's Deputy Governors

As soon as Imam Ali ('a) came to power after the assassination of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, he started dismissing the tyrannical deputy governors and tax collectors that were appointed by 'Uthman, because they were the source of chaos and disorder in the Islamic State and some of them misappropriated the public funds and seized the tributes for themselves.

Of course, 'Uthman did not take into consideration efficiency and competence when he appointed these persons as deputy governors; rather, he put them in these offices on the strength of nepotism and favoritism.

Because Egypt was the center of the Muslim regions and districts, Imam Ali ('a) appointed the best and most virtuous of his efficient and experienced men as deputy governors of this region. The first to hold the office of the deputy governorship of Egypt was Qays ibn Sa'd.

Qays Ibn Sa'd

Qays was the Holy Prophet's revered companion and the son of Sa'd ibn 'Abadah the elite of the tribe of Khazraj. Besides being a man of learning, he was tall, good looking, and of robust building. Charity, valor, and orattion were his main characteristics. He was very far-sighted and thoughtful.

In those days, five persons were considered masters in politics and diplomacy. They were Mu'awiyah, Abu-Sufyan, 'Amr Ibn Al-'As, Al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah, Abdullah ibn Badil, and Qays ibn Sa'd. Of these, Abdullah ibn Badil and Qays ibn Sa'd were on the side of Imam Ali ('a).

Although Sa'd was an authority on politics, he never bypassed the requirements of the religion while making the political moves.

Therefore, he used to say, 'If Islam were not in the way, I would make such moves that it would not be possible for the Arabs to counter them.' 15

He remained in the company of the Holy Prophet (S) for ten years and learned from him the niceties of the religion. He took part in all of the military campaigns led by the Holy Prophet (S). In some of those battles, he had the privilege of carrying the Standard of Islam. He was also assigned for the collection of taxes by the Holy Prophet (S).

He inherited the qualities of charity and kindness from his father. During battles, he would even take loans to feed the men. Sometimes, he slaughtered the camels meant for his personal transport for this purpose. When the men mentioned about this event to the Holy Prophet (S), he said: **Generosity is the habit of his family**.16

When Imam Ali ('a) became the caliph in the month of Safar AH 36, he selected Qays for the governorate of Egypt because of his family background, capability, and political acumen. He asked him to organize an army and take it with him and to treat people kindly. He ('a) thus said to Qays,

Go out to prepare your luggage and take with you the people that you trust and whomever you wish to accompany you, so that you will enter Egypt along with your army. This will create horror in the hearts of your enemies and will make your devotees feel dignified. Act kindly to the good-doers, use strict procedures against the suspicious, and act leniently towards the ordinary and the elite people, because lenience is always good omen.

Qays answered, 'I will enter the city with an army, because if I do it not, I will never be able to enter it. However, I will give the army permission to join you if you need them. If you then intend to send them to a certain destination, they will be at your service.'

Since Qays was permitted to take a few persons with him, he selected a team of seven persons and left for Egypt. When he

reached Egypt, he went to the minbar of the mosque and gave a sermon, saying, 'All praise be to Allah Who has manifested the truth. He has crushed the falsehood and demeaned the unkind.

O people, we have owed our allegiance to the person who, after our Prophet (S), is superior to all persons that we know. O people, rise; and on the basis of the Book and the Prophetic traditions, owe your allegiance to him. If we do not follow the Book and the Prophetic traditions in your affairs, then you will not be bound by this pledge of allegiance!'17

Thus, the masses pledged allegiance to Imam Ali ('a).

This incident enraged Mu'awiyah so much that he went on plotting schemes and trying to take Qays to his side. He thus wrote a letter to Qays accusing him of having a role in the assassination of 'Uthman and promising him to of anything he would ask for if he would join him. Qays however answered back with a letter of nice words and dexterous purport.

When Mu'awiyah could not find any gap in Qays' letter, he sent him another letter confirming what he had mentioned in the first one. However, Qays answered back that he would never give up his pledge to the true leader and would never obey Mu'awiyah.

Mu'awiyah then invented another scheme when he spread the rumors that Qays had paid allegiance to him. When these rumors reached Imam Ali ('a), he became very sad. However, the Imam ('a) had to depose Qays from his office and appointed Malik Al-Ashtar or Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr in his place. 18

Malik Al-Ashtar

Malik Al-Ashtar is one of the prominent persons in Islam and one of the heroes. He dedicated his entire lifetime to serving Almighty Allah and the religion.

Faithfully and earnestly, he stood by Imam Ali (‘a) and defended him under the harshest circumstances. Conferring honor to the great standing and eminent struggle of Malik, Imam Ali (‘a) declared,

Malik’s position to me was just like my position to the Messenger of Allah.

After the Imam (‘a) deposed Qays ibn Sa’d from the office of the deputy governorship of Egypt, he appointed Malik in that office due to his high- ranking personality, outstanding proficiency, and full comprehension of the political and administrational affairs. Besides the golden epistle that the Imam (‘a) gave to Malik, he sent him two more letters. The first comprised the Imam’s view about Malik’s standing and nobility of character. This letter reads as follows:

From the servant of Allah Ali the Leader of the Believers to the people who became wrathful for the sake of Allah when He was disobeyed on His earth, His rights were ignored, and oppression had spread its coverings over the virtuous as well as the vicious, on the local as well as the foreigner. Consequently, no good was acted upon nor any evil was avoided.

Now, I send to you a man from among the servants of Allah who allows himself no sleep in days of danger, nor does he shrink from the enemy at critical moments. He is severer on the wicked than a blazing fire. He is Malik ibn Al-Harith, our brother from the tribe of Madhhij. Therefore, listen to him and obey his orders that accord with the truth, because he is a sword among the swords of Allah, whose edge is not dull and which does not miss its victim.

If he orders you to advance, you must then advance; and if he orders you to stay, you must then stay, because he surely neither advances or attacks nor puts anyone backward or forward save with my command. I have preferred him for you rather than for myself because of his being your well-wisher and because of the severity of his harshness over your enemies. 19

The second letter sent by Imam Ali ('a) to Malik Al-Ashtar demonstrated the tragic acts through which the Imam ('a) had to go after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S). The letter reads as follows:

Now, Allah the Glorified deputed Muhammad (may Allah bless him and his descendants) as a warner for all the worlds and a witness for all the prophets. When the Prophet expired, the Muslims quarreled about power after him. By Allah, it never occurred to me, and I never imagined, that after the Prophet, the Arabs would snatch away the caliphate from the members of his house (**i.e. the Ahl Al-Bayt**), *nor that they would take it away from me after him, but I suddenly noticed people surrounding the man to swear him allegiance.*

I therefore withheld my hand until I saw that many people were reverting from Islam and trying to destroy the religion of Muhammad (may Allah bless him and his descendants). I then feared that if I did not protect Islam and its people and there occurred in it a breach or destruction, it would mean a greater blow to me than the loss of power over you which was, in any case, to last for a few days of which everything would pass away as the mirage passes away, or as the cloud scuds away.

Therefore, in these happenings, I rose until wrong was destroyed and disappeared, and religion attained peace and safety.

By Allah, if I had encountered them alone and they had been so numerous as to fill the earth to the brim, I would not have worried or become perplexed. I am clear in myself and possess conviction from Allah about their misguidance and my guidance. I am hopeful and expectant that I will meet Allah and win His good reward.

But I am worried that silly and wicked people will control the affairs of the entire community, with the result that they will grab the funds of Allah as their own property and make His people slaves 20 *, fight with the virtuous, and ally with the sinful.*

Indeed, there is among them he who drank wine and who was whipped by way of punishment fixed by Islam, and there is he who did not accept

Islam until he had secured financial gain through it. If this had not been so, I would not have insisted on gathering you, reprehending you, mobilizing you, and urging you for jihad; but if you refuse and show weakness, I will leave you.

Do you not see that the boundaries of your cities have diminished, your populated areas have been conquered, your possessions have been snatched away, and your cities and lands have been attacked? May Allah have mercy on you, get up to fight your enemy and do not remain confined to the earth, otherwise you will face oppression and suffer ignominy and your fate will be the worst. The warrior should be wakeful because if he sleeps, the enemy does not sleep; and that is an end to the matter. 21

As has been previously mentioned, Imam Ali ('a), besides these two letters, sent a golden epistle to Malik Al-Ashtar in which he discussed all the affairs related to the human rights and the rights and duties of the rulers towards their subjects. The majority of the paragraphs of the golden epistle has been earlier mentioned with some comments.

The Imam ('a) ended the epistle with the following words:

It is necessary for you to recall how matters went with those who preceded you, be it a government, a great tradition, a precedent of our Prophet (may Allah bless him and his descendants), or the obligatory commands contained in the Book of Allah.

Then, you should follow them as you have seen us acting upon them and should exert yourself in following that I have enjoined upon you in this document in which I have exhausted my pleas on you, so that if your heart advances towards its passions, you may have no plea in its support.

I ask Allah through the extent of His mercy and the greatness of His power of giving a good inclination that He may prompt me and you to advance a clear plea before Him and His creatures in a manner that may attract His pleasure along with handsome praise among the people, good effect in the country, an increase in prosperity, and a heightening of

honor; and that He may allow me and you to die a death of virtue and martyrdom.

Surely, we have to return to Him. Peace be on the Messenger of Allah. May Allah show His blessings and plentiful salutation on him and on his pure and chaste descendants; and that is an end to the matter.

Martyrdom Of Malik

On his way to Egypt to assume his new office, Malik Al-Ashtar met Nafi', a manumitted slave of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, whom Mu'awiyah had entrusted with the wicked mission of assassinating Malik with poison. Nafi' was so tactful that he could convince Malik to accompany him to Egypt. In the middle of their journey, Nafi' served Malik with some honey that he had poisoned.

Once Malik had that honey, the poison spread in his body and killed him, while Nafi' fled to Mu'awiyah to convey this news to him. Of course, it was happy news for Mu'awiyah who, expressing his joy, gathered people and said to them, ''Ali ibn Abi Talib had two hands. In the Battle of Siffin, I could cut off one of them; namely, 'Ammar ibn Yasir, and today, I could cut off the other; namely, Malik Al-Ashtar.'[22]

When this news was conveyed to Imam Ali ('a), he became so sad and started shedding tears for the martyrdom of the great person whose life was a role- model of serving the Imam ('a).

Declaring the martyrdom of Malik, Imam Ali ('a) said,

We are Allah's, and to Him shall we be returned. All praise be to Allah the Lord of the Worlds. O Allah, I refer the death of Malik to You alone, because his death is one of the misfortunes of time. May Allah have mercy upon Malik; he did fulfill his promise, complete his vow, and meet his Lord.

Although we have habituated ourselves to keeping steadfastness at all misfortunes after our having been stricken by the misfortune of losing

the Messenger of Allah (S), this is indeed one of the most catastrophic misfortunes. 23

How exceptional man Malik was! What is Malik? If I describe him as mountain, he is surely the most unshakable piece of a mountain. If I describe him as rock, he is surely the most rigid rock. By Allah, the death of Malik has saddened a group of people and, at the same time, has gladdened another. For the like of Malik should weepers weep. However, there is none like Malik. 24

Muhammad Ibn Abi-Bakr

After the martyrdom of Malik Al-Ashtar, Imam Ali ('a) assigned Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr as the deputy governor of Egypt and furnished him with the following instructions in a form of an epistle:

Behave humbly with the people, keep yourself lenient, meet them largeheartedly, and accord them equal treatment so that the big should not expect injustice from you in their favor and the low should not be despondent of your justice to them. Allah the Sublime will certainly question you, O community of His creatures, about your actions, small or big, open or concealed. If He punishes you, it is because you have been oppressive, and if He forgives, then it is because He is the Most Generous.

Know, O creatures of Allah, that the God-fearing (people) have shared the joys of this transient world as well as the next coming world, for they shared with the people of this world in their worldly matters while their people did not share with them in the matters of the next world.

They lived in this world in the best manner of living, ate the choicest food, and, consequently, they enjoyed herein all that the people with ease of life enjoyed, and secured from it what the haughty and the vain secured. Then, they departed from it after taking provision enough to take them to the end of their journey and after doing a profitable transaction.

They tasted the pleasure of renouncing the world in this world, and they firmly believed that on the coming day in their next life, they would be neighbors of Allah, where their call would not be repulsed nor would their share of pleasure be small.

Therefore, O creatures of Allah, be afraid of death and its measures and keep ready all that is needed for it. It will come as a big event and a great affair, either as a good in which there will never be any evil, or an evil in which there will never be any good. Who is nearer to Paradise than he who works towards it, and who is nearer to Hell than he who works for it?

You are being chased by death. If you stop, it will catch you, and if you run away from it, it will grip you. It is more attached to you than your reflection. Death is tied to your forelocks while the world is being wrapped up from behind you. Therefore, fear the Fire whose hollow is deep, whose flames are severe, and whose punishment is novel.
It is a place wherein there is no mercy. No call is heard in it. No pain is healed in it. If it is possible for you to have severe fear of Allah and to rest hope in Him, then do both these things because every individual can have hope in His Lord to the extent of his fear of His Lord. Certainly, the most hopeful person with Allah is he who fears Him most.

O Muhammad the son of Abu-Bakr, know that I have given you charge of Egypt, which is my biggest force. So, you are duty-bound to oppose your passions and serve as a shield against your religion even though you may have only an hour in the world; and do not enrage Allah for pleasing others because Allah is such that He may take the place of others, but others cannot take the place of Allah.

Perform the prayers at the appointed time. Do not perform them it earlier for the sake of available leisure nor delay it on account of pre-occupation. Remember that every act of yours is dependent on your prayer.

The leader of guidance and the leader of destruction cannot be equal, nor the friend of the Prophet and the enemy of the Prophet. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said to me, **'In respect of my people, I am afraid neither of a believer nor of an unbeliever. As for the believer, Allah**

will afford him protection because of his belief; and as for the unbeliever, Allah will humiliate him because of his unbelief. But I am afraid about every one of you who is hypocrite in his heart and learned of speech. He speaks what you hold excellent but does what you dislike. 25

Abu-Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir Al-Tabari, in his famous book entitled **Tarikh Al-Umam wa'l-Muluk** and famously known as **Tarikh Al-Tabari,** has recorded that Abdullah ibn Abi-Rafi', the manumitted slave of the Holy Prophet (S), wrote down the following epistle that Imam Ali ('a) sent to Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr on the first of Ramadan, AH 36:

In the Name of Allah; the All-beneficent, the All-merciful (I begin). This is the epistle of the servant of Allah, Ali, the Leader of the Believers, to Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr as he appoints him as the deputy governor of Egypt.

He (i.e. Imam Ali) orders him (i.e. Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr) to fear Allah in his covert and overt affairs and to dread Allah the Almighty and All- majestic in absence and presence. He orders him to act leniently towards the Muslims, harshly towards the sinful, and fairly towards the non- Muslims who live under the protection of the Muslim State.

He also orders him to give the oppressed people their dues, to be severe to the oppressors, to pardon people, and to lean on charitable acting as much as he can, for Allah will surely reward the doers of charity and chastise the criminals.

He orders him to invite all those who are under his rule to obedience and abiding by unity among them, because if they do so, they will win such good end result and abundant reward that they can neither estimate nor recognize its reality.

He orders him to collect the tributes of the lands following the same program that was followed by those who had collected them before him; he should thus neither decrease nor add to it. He should then distribute the funds of the tributes in the same manner that was followed before him.

He should also behave humbly with people and treat them equally when he meets and receives them. Thus, the faraway and the close should be treated equally as long as they follow the truth.

He orders him to judge between people with justice, to establish equity, not to follow his personal whims, and not to fear the censure of any censurer in matters appertained to Allah the Almighty and All-majestic. Verily, Allah-majestic be the praising of Him-is always with those who fear Him and prefer obedience to Him and to His orders rather than obedience to anything or anyone else. 26

A Serious Letter Of Mu' Awiyah To Muhammad Ibn Abi-Bakr

This is an important and serious letter that Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan sent in reply to a letter sent to him by Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr, inviting him to pay homage to Imam Ali ('a).

In this letter, Mu'awiyah confirmed that all the calamities that afflicted the Muslim community was originally because of Abu-Bakr and 'Umar. He thus introduced these two persons as the only ones responsible for every event that took place after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S).

This is the text of this letter:

'From Mu'awiyah the son of Sakhr to Muhammad the son of Abu-Bakr who is impious to his father:

I have received your missive in which you have mentioned Allah, His greatness, omnipotence, and authority in an appropriate way and you have mentioned other articles about Allah's choosing His Prophet as well as many other words that you had composed and invented, while these words demonstrate the fragility of your opinion and imply reproach of your father.

In these words, you have referred to the right of the son of Abu Talib as well as his precedence, his relation tie with Allah's Prophet, his support for him, and his sacrifices for him in all horrible and breathtaking situations. So, in your argument against me and finding fault with me, you have presented the virtues of someone other than you.

Thank Allah for He has taken away this virtue from you and given it to someone else. We, plus your father, since the lifetime of our Prophet, used to recognize the precedence of the son of Abu-Talib to be binding on us, and his virtue to be surpassing us.

After Allah had chosen for His Prophet what He has in possession, fulfilled what He had promised him, made prevalent his call, and made overcoming his arguments, He took him (i.e. the Prophet) towards Him (i.e. Almighty Allah). Then, your father and his *Faruq* (i.e. 'Umar) were the first to rob his right and to infringe his order, although these two had already agreed to do this.

They then called him (i.e. Imam Ali) to pledge allegiance to them, but he was too slow and too dilatory to respond to them. As a result, they determined to face him with grievous acts and decided to apply to him the gravest thing (i.e. killing).

However, he then swore allegiance and surrendered to them; therefore, they neither gave him any share in their affairs nor did they apprise him of their confidential matters. When they passed away and ceased to exist, they appointed 'Uthman ibn 'Affan after them, following their guidance and patterning after them.

However, your acquaintance and you censured him so intensely that you both made even the remote disobedient people revolt against him. You also incurred the animosity of him secretly and openly, and revealed your rancor towards him until you attained what you had wanted against him.

So, be careful, son of Abu-Bakr, for you will very soon face the bad consequence of your deeds. If you only measure your tiny

size with your own tool, you will find that you are too short to be parallel or equivalent to one whose forbearance is as weighty as mountains, whose lance cannot be bent under duress, and whose endurance cannot be attained by any one known for his tolerance.

It is your father who had paved the way to him (i.e. Mu'awiyah), and constructed and established his sovereignty. If our current course is true, then your father was its originator, but if it is false and wrong, then it is still your father who founded it, and we are only partners of him, since we followed his guidance and patterned after his deeds.

Had it not been for what your father had already done, we would not have opposed the son of Abu Talib; rather, we would certainly have succumbed to him. However, when we saw your father doing this before us, we only imitated and took after him. So, you must first of all censure your father as you like; otherwise, you must leave this issue. Peace be upon those who turn from their errors and repent remorsefully.'27

This letter sheds light on the reason for Mu'awiyah's armed rebellion against Imam Ali ('a). In his rebellion, Mu'awiyah, as he claims, depended upon the actions of Abu-Bakr and 'Umar who had taken over power by force and usurped Imam Ali ('a) from his right, paving the way for Mu'awiyah and his likes to fight and wage war against the Imam ('a).

Martyrdom Of Muhammad

Mu'awiyah sent an army under the commandership of 'Amr ibn Al-'As to occupy Egypt during the deputy governorship of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr. When the two armies encountered each other in a battle, the Egyptian army could beat Mu'awiyah's, but Mu'awiyah supplied his army with a great number of troops and a fierce combat took place during which the Egyptian army was defeated and Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr had no other way than hiding himself in a site of ruins.

Finally, Muhammad was captured, executed, and his body was cast on a carcass of a donkey and then set to fire after his head was cut off and sent as present to Mu'awiyah. 28

Upon hearing the news of Muhammad's martyrdom, Imam Ali ('a), expressing his grief, said,

*He (Muhammad) was one of my beloved persons and he was my foster son.*29

Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr, May Allah have mercy on him, has been martyred. We seek his reward from Allah. As a son, he was a well-wisher, a hard worker, a sharp sword, and a bastion of defense. 30

Qutham Ibn 'Abbas

Appointed by Imam Ali ('a) as the deputy governor of Makkah, Qutham ibn Al-'Abbas, the Imam's cousin, was the son of the first woman to convert to Islam after the great lady Khadijah. Because of his piety and generosity, Qutham enjoyed a remarkable standing with Imam Ali ('a).

Mu'awiyah sent some men in the garb of pilgrims to Makkah in order to create sensation in the peaceful atmosphere of the place, by taking common men into their confidence, by a show of piety and God-fearing and then convincing them that Imam Ali ('a) had instigated the people against 'Uthman and in the end succeeded in having him killed.

In this way, they were to hold him responsible for the killing of 'Uthman and to turn the people against him, and also to incline the people towards Mu'awiyah by mentioning the greatness of his character, the sublimity of his manners, and fabricated stories of his generosity.

However, when the men whom Imam Ali ('a) had put on the job gave him the information, he wrote this letter to Qutham to keep

an eye on their movements and to put a stop to their mischief-makers:

My spy in the west has written to me telling me that some people of Syria have been sent for Hajj who are blind of heart, deaf of ears, and devoid of eyesight. They confound the truth with vanity, obey men in disobeying Allah, claim the milk of the world in the name of religion, and trade in the pleasures of this world by forsaking the rewards of the virtuous and the God-fearing.

No one achieves good except he who acts for it, and no one is awarded the recompense of evil except he who commits it. Therefore, behave yourself in your duties like an intelligent, experienced, well- wishing, and wise man who follows his superior and is obedient to his Imam. You should avoid what you may have to explain. Do not rise up in riches nor lose courage in distress; and that is an end to the matter.[31]

On another occasion, Imam Ali ('a) sent the following epistle to Qutham:

Now, make arrangements for the Hajj pilgrimage by the people, remind them of the days to be devoted to Allah, sit for giving them audience morning and evening, explain the law to the seeker, teach the ignorant, and discuss with the learned. There should be no intermediary between you and the people except your tongue and no guard save your own face.

Do not prevent any needy person from meeting you, because if the needy is returned unsatisfied from your door in the first instance, then even doing it thereafter will not bring you praise.

See what has been collected with you of the funds of Allah in the public treasury and spend it over the persons with families, the distressed, the starving, and the naked, at your end. Then, send the remaining to us for distribution to those who are on this side.

Ask the people of Makkah not to charge rent from lodgers, because Allah the Glorified says, **''alike; for the dweller therein as well as the stranger.'**

The dweller, here, means he who is living there, while the stranger means he who is not among the people of Makkah comes for the Hajj Pilgrimage from outside. May Allah grant you and us promptitude for seeking His love by doing good acts; and that is an end to the matter.32

Sahl Ibn Hunayf

When Imam Ali ('a) marched to lead his army to the Battle of the Camel, he appointed Sahl ibn Hunayf Al-Ansari as the deputy governor of Al-Madinah.

When the Imam ('a) was informed that a group of the people of Al-Madinah joined Mu'awiyah, he sent the following epistle to Sahl:

Now, I have come to know that certain persons from your side are stealthily going over to Mu'awiyah. Do not feel sorry for their numbers so lost to you or for their help of which you are deprived. It is enough that they have gone into misguidance and you have been relieved of them. They are running away from guidance and truth and advancing towards blindness and ignorance.

They are seekers of this world, they are proceeding to it, and they are leaping towards it. They have known justice, seen it, heard it, and appreciated it. They have realized that here, to us, all men are equal in the matter of the truth. Therefore, they ran away to selfishness and partiality. Let them remain remote and far away.

By Allah, surely they have not gone away from oppression and joined justice. In this matter, we only desire Allah to resolve for us its hardships and to level for us its unevenness, if Allah wills; and that is an end to the matter. 33

'Ubaydullah Ibn Al-'Abbas

During the reign of ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, the deputy governor of Yemen, Ya’la ibn Munabbih, had embezzled the funds of the tributes and fled to Makkah, 34 using these funds for mobilizing troops to support ‘A'ishah in her war against Imam Ali (‘a).

When he became the caliph, Imam Ali (‘a) appointed ‘Ubaydullah ibn ‘Abbas as the deputy governor of Yemen. When Mu’awiyah mobilized an army under the commandership of Busr ibn Arta'ah to raid on Yemen, ‘Ubaydullah fled to Al-Kufah to survive the onslaught of Busr.

However, Busr the criminal arrested the two children of ‘Ubaydullah and killed them as one of the most hideous crimes of the representatives of Mu’awiyah. This incident saddened Imam Ali (‘a) too much that he invoked Almighty Allah’s curse upon Busr, saying, *‘O Allah, please divest Busr of his faith and reason.’*

‘Umar Ibn Abi-Salamah

Imam Ali (‘a) appointed ‘Umar ibn Abi-Salamah Al-Makhzumi as the deputy governor of Bahrain. The foster child of the Holy Prophet (S) and the son of the virtuous lady Ummu-Salamah, ‘Umar was born in Abyssinia in the second year of Hegira. He was exceptionally sincere and loyal to Imam Ali (‘a).

In the Battle of the Camel, ‘Umar’s mother sent him to fight to the side of Imam Ali (‘a) and supplied him with a letter to the Imam (‘a) in which she wrote down, ‘Had it not been that women are not allowed to participate in jihad, I would surely have come to support you and fight before you. However, this is my son, the peer of my soul. I thus please you, O Leader of the Believers, to take care of him and lead him to the fields of decency.’

However, Imam Ali (‘a) deposed ‘Umar from his office and wrote him the following epistle;

Now, I have decided to entrust Al-Nu'man ibn 'Ajlan Al-Zurqi with the office of the deputy governorship of Yemen and depose you from this office although this must not be understood as dispraise of you or blame. Certainly, you have done your job excellently and fulfilled the trust wonderfully.

Now, you may come to us while you are free from any accusation, censure, or sinning. By doing so, I only intend to march towards the oppressive people of Syria and I thus want you to be in my company, because you are one of those upon whom I depend in struggling against my enemy and establishing the pillar of the religion, if Allah wills. 35

Al-Nu' Man Ibn 'Ajlan

The spokesman and poet of the Ansar, Al-Nu'man ibn 'Ajlan composed some poetic verses, criticizing Abu-Bakr for holding the position of caliphate, which is the right of Ali ibn Abi Talib('a).

When Al-Nu'man was appointed as the governor of Bahrain by Imam Ali ('a), he bestowed big funds upon his family members, and when the Imam ('a) was informed about this, he deposed him from this office-the reason that made him flee and join Mu'awiyah. 36

Mikhnaf Ibn Sulaym

Imam Ali ('a) appointed Mikhnaf ibn Sulaym Al-Azdi Al-Ghamidi-one of the companions of the Holy Prophet (S) and Imam Ali ('a) and the warriors of the Battle of Siffin-as his deputy governor of Isfahan, a city in central Persia.

He ('a) wrote the following instructive epistle to Mikhnaf:

He (Imam Ali) orders him to fear Allah in his secret matters and hidden actions, where there is no witness except Him and no one watches save Him. He also orders him that whatever he does in obedience to Allah openly should not be different from what he does secretly. He whose hid-

den position is not different from his open position and whose action is not different from his words has discharged his obligation and his worship is pure.

He also orders him that he should not harass them, should not be harsh on them, and should not turn away from them because of superiority of official position over them, for they are brethren in faith and helpers in the recovery of levies.

Certainly, you have a fixed share and a known right in this levy, and there are other sharers who are poor, weak, and starving. We shall discharge your rights. So, you should discharge their rights. If you do not do so, you will have the largest number of enemies on the Day of Judgment.

How wretched the man is when his enemies in the view of Allah are the needy, the destitute, the beggars, the turned away, the indebted, and the penniless travelers! He who treats the trust slightly, indulges in treachery, and does not keep himself and his faith untarnished by it, has certainly secured humiliation in this world, and his humiliation and disgrace in the next world will be greater.

Surely, the greatest treachery is the treachery against the Muslim community, and the most hideous deceit is the deceit towards the Muslim leaders; and that is an end to the matter. 37

When Imam Ali (‘a) was determined to fight against Mu’awiyah, he sent the following letter to Mikhnaf asking him for support and aid:

Peace be upon you! Beforehand, I praise Allah save Whom there is no god. Now, it is obligatory upon those who recognize Almighty Allah and the truth to struggle against those who have turned aside from the truth on account of their deliberate abandonment of it and those who have penetrated deeply into the somnolence of blindness and deviation voluntarily.

Verily, Allah is pleased with only those who please Him and is wrathful with those who disobey Him. We have been determined to march to these people who have dealt with the servants of Allah contrary to what Allah has revealed, misappropriated the public funds, refrained from executing the religious laws, muffled the truth, caused mischief to appear in the lands, and chosen for the sinful, but not the faithful, as their adherents.

When a saint of Allah deemed grave their misdeeds, they would hate, eliminate, and deprive him of his dues; but if a wrongdoer helped them oppress people, they would love, approximate (him to them), and treat him kindly. They have thus insisted on oppression and agreed on violating the truth. However, they have already warded off from the truth, helped each other in sinning, and acted wrongfully.

Once you receive this letter of mine, you may appoint the most trustworthy of your companions in your opinion as your representative and come to us so that we both will encounter our enemy who has violated the prohibitions of Almighty Allah. By doing so, you will enjoin the right, forbid the evil, join those who are in the right, and disown those who are in the wrong.

Indeed, neither you nor we can dispense with the reward of jihad. Allah is sufficient for us, and He is the best disposer of affairs. There is neither might nor power except with Allah the All-high and All-great. 38

Masqalah Ibn Hubayrah

Imam Ali (‘a) employed Masqalah ibn Hubayrah Al-Shaybani as his deputy governor of Ardashir-Khurrah, one of the districts of Persia that included the city of Shiraz as well as other cities. When the Imam (‘a) was informed that Masqalah distributed the funds of the public treasury among poets, members of his tribe, and everyone who would ask him for money improperly, he wrote the following epistle to him:

Now, I have been informed against you that you are distributing the funds of Muslims among your family members and among every one

who comes to you such as the beggars, the parties, and the untruthful poets as same as you distribute walnuts. However, I still cannot believe this about you.

I swear by Him Who split the grains and fashioned the souls that I will inspect this matter as effectively as possible; if I then find out that it was true, you will then find yourself humiliated in my sight. So, do not be one of the losers by their deeds; whose labor is lost in this world's life and they think that they are well versed in skill of the work of hands. 39

However, Masqalah, in a reply to the Imam's letter, confirmed that he had not embezzled even one coin from the public funds and asked Imam Ali ('a) to depose him if the information against him would be proven true.

When the Imam ('a) received this letter, he said, *'I believe that Abu'l-Fasl (i.e. Masqalah) is truthful.'* 40

Unfortunately, Masqalah finally fled to Mu'awiyah after he had imposed upon himself debts that he could not pay back. 41

Kumayl Ibn Ziyad

One of the most brilliant companions of Imam Ali ('a), Kumayl ibn Ziyad Al- Nakha'i occupied a remarkable standing in the view of Imam Ali ('a) who entrusted him with his special affairs and secrets, fed him with his most outstanding instructions, and taught him the highest nobilities of character, finest precepts, and most effective words, one of which was the famous supplicatory prayer known as the Supplication of Kumayl, because Kumayl was the reporter.

Imam Ali ('a) assigned Kumayl as the deputy governor of Hit, one of the towns of Baghdad that is situated on the bank of River Euphrates, forming the borders between Iraq and Syria.42

Mu'awiyah mobilized six thousand soldiers under the commandership of Sufyan ibn 'Awf and ordered them to raid on Hit, Al-

Anbar, and Al-Mada'in and damage their peoples. When Sufyan came to Hit, he found no power to face him; he therefore raided on Al-Anbar where there was a military base of Imam Ali's army under the commandership of Kumayl ibn Ziyad.

Along with the remaining two hundred soldiers, Kumayl marched to fight against Mu'awiyah's soldiers before he had the permission of Imam Ali ('a). As a result, a battle took place during which about thirty soldiers of Imam Ali's army were killed and the soldiers of Mu'awiyah could plunder the city of Al- Anbar and return to Syria with victory.

When the news reached Imam Ali ('a), he criticized Kumayl and sent him the following letter:

Now, the neglecting by a man of what he has been made responsible for and doing what is to be done by others is a manifest weakness and a ruinous sight. Certainly, your advance on the people of Qirqisiya, and your leaving the arsenals over which we had set you, without anyone to protect them or to repulse the enemy force, savored of shattered thinking.

In this way, you served like a bridge for the enemy who came marauding on your allies while your arms were weak, you had no awe around you; you could not prevent the enemy from advancing; you could not break his might; you could not defend the people of your area and you could not discharge functions on behalf of your Imam.[43]

Al-Ash'ath Ibn Qays

Al-Ash'ath was the deputy governor of Azerbaijan during the reign of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan. However, he kept this office when Imam Ali ('a) became the caliph. The Imam ('a) sent him the following epistle:

Now, had it not been for the defects that you enjoy, you would have been preceded to other people in this affair. However, your defects may be for-

given if you commit to piety and fear of Allah. You have known the details of the people's pledges of allegiance to me.

Although Talhah and Al- Zubayr were within those who had paid homage to me, they broke their pledge of allegiance to me for no reason and instigated the Mother of the Believers to march, along with them, to Al-Basrah where we met. There, I advised them to return home and retreat from the rebellion they had declared against me, but they refused. I thus did my best in calling them and acted excellently towards the remnants of them.

Certainly, your assignment is not a morsel for you, but it is a trust round your neck, and you have been charged with the protection of the people on behalf of your superiors. It is not for you to be oppressive towards the ruled, nor to risk yourself save on strong grounds.

You have in your hands the funds, which are the property of Allah to Whom belong all might and majesty, and you hold its charge until you pass it on to me. Probably, I will not be one of the bad rulers for you, and that is an end to the matter.[44]

After the Battle of the Camel, Imam Ali ('a) wrote this letter to Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays Al-Kindi to send the revenue and levies of his province. Since Al-Ash'ath had fears about the future of his position and assignment, he intended to swallow all this money like other deputy governors and officers of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan did.

Therefore, when this letter reached him, he sent for his chief associates and after mentioning this letter to them said, 'I fear that this money will be taken away from me; I therefore intend to join Mu'awiyah.' However, those people said that it was a matter of shame to leave kith and kin and seek refuge with Mu'awiyah. Consequently, on the advice of these people, he postponed his idea to run away but did not agree to part with the money.
On receiving this information, Imam Ali ('a) sent Hujr ibn 'Adi Al-Kindi to bring him to Al-Kufah. He persuaded him and could bring him to Al-Kufah. On reaching there, his kit was found to contain four hundred thousand dirhams out of which Imam Ali

(‘a) left thirty thousand for him and deposited the rest in the public treasury.

However, Imam Ali (‘a) sent another epistle to Al-Ash’ath in which he deposed him of this position. The epistle reads as follows:

Now, it is only the respite of Allah that is granted to you has deceived you and given you the audacity to misbehave with the other people. You have always eaten from the sustenance given to you by Allah, disbelieved in His Signs, enjoyed your lot awhile, and wasted your good deeds up to this moment of your lifetime. Once you receive this letter of mine, you must come to me carrying with you all the funds of Muslims that you have under your hand, by the will of Allah. 45

‘Uthman Ibn Hunayf

The people of Al-Basrah, at that time, were known for their absolute loyalty to ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan; therefore, the rebels against Imam Ali’s government marched to this city and occupied it to be the center of their rebellion.

Imam Ali (‘a) appointed a number of people as the deputy governors of Al- Basrah, the first of whom was ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf, one of the most prominent companions of the Holy Prophet (S). He is described by historicists to have enjoyed distinctive sagacity and full awareness of all affairs.46

In Al-Basrah, a group of people invited ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf to a banquet, and he responded.

When Imam Ali (‘a) came to know about this, he sent him the following marvelous letter:

O son of Hunayf, I have come to know that a young man of Al-Basrah invited you to a feast and you leapt towards it. Foods of different colors were being chosen for you and big bowls were being given to you. I never thought that you would accept the feast of a people who turn out the beg-

gars and invite the rich. Look at the morsels you take, leave out that about which you are in doubt, and take that about which you are sure that it has been secured lawfully.

Remember that every follower has a leader whom he follows and from the effulgence of whose knowledge he takes light. Realize that your Imam has contented himself with two shabby pieces of cloth out of the comforts of the world and two loaves for his meal. Certainly, you cannot do so but at least support me in piety, exertion, chastity, and uprightness, because, by Allah, I have not treasured any gold out of your world nor amassed plentiful wealth nor collected any clothes other than the two shabby sheets.

Of course, all that we had in our possession under this sky was Fadak, but a group of people felt greedy for it and the other party withheld themselves from it. Allah is, after all, the best arbiter. What shall I do: Fadak, or no Fadak, while tomorrow this body is to go into the grave in whose darkness its traces will be destroyed and even news of it will disappear.

It is a pit that, even if its width is widened or the hands of the digger makes it broad and open, the stones and clods of clay will narrow it and the falling earth will close its aperture. I try to keep myself engaged in piety so that on the day of great fear it will be peaceful and steady in slippery places.

If I had wished, I could have taken the way leading towards worldly pleasures like pure honey, fine wheat, and silky clothes; but it cannot be that my passions lead me and greed takes me to choosing good meals while in Al-Hijaz or Yamamah, there may be people who have no hope of getting bread or who do not have a full meal. Shall I lie with a satiated belly while around me there may be hungry bellies and thirsty livers? Or shall I be as the poet has said:

'It is enough for you to have a disease that you lie with your belly full while around you people may be badly yearning for dried leather.'

Shall I be content with being called the Leader of the Believers, although I do not share with the people the hardships of the world? Or shall I be an

example for them in the distresses of life? I have not been created to keep myself busy in eating good foods like the tied animal whose only worry is his fodder or like a loose animal whose activity is to swallow.

It fills its belly with its feed and forgets the purpose behind it. Shall I be left uncontrolled to pasture freely? Or shall I draw the rope of misguidance? Or shall I roam aimlessly in the paths of bewilderment?

I see as if one of you would say that if this is what the son of Abu Talib eats, then weakness must have made him unfit to fight his foes and encounter the brave. Remember that the tree of the forest is the best of timber, while green twigs have soft bark, and the wild bushes are very strong for burning and slow in dying off.

My relation with the Messenger of Allah is that of one branch with another, or of the wrist with the forearm. By Allah, if the Arabs join together to fight me, I will not run away from them; and if I get the opportunity, I will hasten to catch them by their necks. I shall surely strive to relieve the earth of this man of perverse mind and uncouth body until the bits of the earth are removed from the grain.

Get away from me, O world! Your rein is on your own shoulders as I have released myself from your ditches, removed myself of your snares, and avoided walking into your slippery places. Where are those whom you have deceived by your jokes? Where are those communities whom you have enticed with your embellishments? They are all confined to graves and hidden in burial places.

By Allah, if you had been a visible personality and a body capable of feeling, I would have awarded you the penalties fixed by Allah because of the people whom you received through desires and the communities whom you threw into destruction and the rulers whom you consigned to ruin and drove to places of distress after which there is neither going nor returning.

Indeed whoever stepped on your slippery place slipped, whoever rode your waves was drowned, and whoever evaded your snares received inward support. He who keeps himself safe from you does not worry even

though his affairs may be straitened and the world to him is like a day that is near expiring.

Get away from me (O world), for, by Allah, I do not bow before you so that you may humiliate me, nor do I let loose the reins for you so that you may drive me away. I swear by Allah an oath wherein I, except the will of Allah, that I shall so train myself that it will feel joyful if it gets one loaf for eating, and be content with only salt to season it.

I shall let my eyes empty themselves of tears like the stream whose water has flown away. Should Ali eat whatever he has and fall asleep like the cattle that fill their stomachs from the pasture land and lie down, or as the goats that graze, eat the green grass, and go into their pen! His eyes may die if he, after long years, follows loose cattle and pasturing animals.

Blessed is he who discharges his obligations towards Allah and endures his hardships, allows himself no sleep in the night but when sleep overpowers him, lies down on the ground using his hand as a pillow, along with those who keep their eyes wakeful in fear of the Day of Judgment, whose bodies are ever away from beds, whose lips are humming in remembrance of Allah, and whose sins have been erased through their prolonged implorations for forgiveness.

They are the parry of Allah. Be it known, verily the party of Allah alone shall be the successful one. Therefore, O son of Hunayf, fear Allah and be content with your own loaves so that you may escape Hell.[47]

When Imam Ali (‘a) was informed about the marching of Talhah, Al-Zubayr, and ‘A'ishah to occupy Al-Basrah, he sent the following letter to ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf:

From the servant of Allah, Ali, the Leader of the Believers, To ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf:

Now, the transgressors had made covenant with Allah but they broke their covenant and marched towards your country. Satan has driven them to demand with what Allah does not please. However, Allah is strongest in prowess and strongest to give an exemplary punishment.

When they come to you, then you must call them to obedience (to the leader) and to commit themselves to the fulfillment of the pledge and the covenant that they took upon themselves before they had departed from us. If they respond to you, then you must honor their vicinity to you as long as they will be with you; but if they refuse and insist on clinging to the rope of breaching the covenant and disagreement with us, then you must encounter them in fighting until Allah will judge between them and you, and He is the best of all judges.

I am writing this letter to you from Al- Rabadhah while I am accelerating my march towards you, by the will of Allah.[48]

Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas

Among the family of Al-'Abbas ibn Abd Al-Muttalib the Holy Prophet's uncle, Abdullah ibn 'Abbas was the most brilliant personality in Islam. He studied under Imam Ali ('a) and received many fields of knowledge from him, such as Muslim jurisprudence (fiqh) and Quranic exegesis (Tafsir).

Abdullah was also characterized by discernment, acumen, rationality, and profundity. In view of these features, Imam Ali ('a) took him as his consultant and assistant and used to seek his advice in many of his political and social affairs. The Imam ('a) also depended upon Abdullah ibn 'Abbas in debates and arguments against the rebels and other categories of people. For instance, when he debated with the Khawarij, they failed to discuss him.

Besides, Abdullah ibn 'Abbas enjoyed a lofty position with 'Umar ibn Al- Khattab who respected him highly, although Abdullah used to overwhelm 'Umar in argument:

One day, Abdullah ibn 'Abbas was accompanying 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab in one of the streets of Al-Madinah when the latter put his hand in Abdullah's hand and said, 'I believe that your acquaintance (i.e. Ali ibn Abi Talib) has been wronged.'

Abdullah answered, ‘So, give him back his due.’

Stung by these words, ‘Umar pulled his hand back from Abdullah’s and stopped walking while he was murmuring for a while. He then said to Abdullah, ‘In my conception, the people did not accept your acquaintance as their leader because of no other reason than that they deemed him too young to hold this position.’

Abdullah answered, ‘Allah did not deem him too young when he ordered him to take Surah Bara'ah from Abu-Bakr!’[49]

These words silenced ‘Umar who could not find any answer to Abdullah’s overwhelming argument.

On another occasion, ‘Umar met Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas and said, ‘Do you know the reason for which your people deterred you from holding the position of leadership after Muhammad?’

Abdullah answered, ‘If I do not known, then you must know.’

‘Umar said, ‘They hated that both Prophethood and caliphate should be given to you and then you would boast so excessively over your people. For this reason, the people of Quraysh chose a leader for themselves and they indeed were excellently successful.’

Abdullah said, ‘If you allow me to speak provided that you will hold off your anger from me, I will speak.’

‘Umar said, ‘You may speak.’

Abdullah said, ‘You say that the people of Quraysh chose a leader for themselves and they were excellently successful in their choice. However, if they had chosen for themselves what Allah chose for them, they would have had all success and excellence in their hands and none would have objected or envied them.

You also said that the people of Quraysh hated that we-the Banu-Hashim-would hold both Prophethood and caliphate. However,

Almighty Allah, describing a certain people to have hated something, says,

'That is because they hated what Allah revealed; so, He rendered their deeds null. (47/9)''

These words annoyed 'Umar so markedly that he replied with rude words, saying, 'Too far it is, O son of 'Abbas! I have been informed against you, but I detested settling an account with you on such information so that your standing in my view would not be shaken.'

Abdullah asked, 'What is the information against me? If it is true, then it must not cause you to change your opinion about me; but if it is false, then I am capable of fending off falsity from myself.'

'Umar said, 'I have been informed that you state that the people of Quraysh deterred you from caliphate out of their envy, transgression, and wronging against you.'

Abdullah answered, 'As for wronging us, this has been so obvious for the ignorant and the learnt. As for envy, Adam was envied and we are his envied descendants.'

Infuriated by these words, 'Umar said, 'Too far it is! Too far it is! Your hearts, O descendants of Hashim, are stubbornly full of envy that can never be removed.'

Abdullah answered, 'Slow down! Do not ascribe envy and cheating to the hearts of people from whom Allah has removed filth and whom He has purified thoroughly. Remember that the heart of Allah's Messenger is one of these hearts!'

These words hurt 'Umar's feelings more and more; he therefore shouted at Abdullah, 'Beat it!'

When Abdullah responded and left, 'Umar felt shy and said, 'O son of 'Abbas, stop. By Allah, I will always observe your right and love whatever pleases you.'

However, Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas left after he had said, ‘I have a right that is incumbent upon you as well as every Muslim. Hence, he who regards my right will have done the true thing to do; but he who disregards my right will have missed his own fortuity.’50

Deputy Governorship Of Al-Basrah

After the Battle of the Camel and the unstoppable misfortunes that followed, Imam Ali (‘a) commissioned Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas to hold the office of the deputy governorship of this city so that he, due to his capability of running affairs duly, would put an end to disorder, refute the rumors of the enemies, and guide people to the right path.

Imam Ali (‘a) wrote a number of epistles to Abdullah, one of which was the following brief one:

*Now, do not cause your share (of this office) to be an amount of money that you gain or reTalibation that heals your rage; rather, your share must be such acts that muffle the wrong and revivify the right.*51

On another occasion, Imam Ali (‘a) wrote the following epistle to Abdullah,

*Now, you cannot go farther than the limit of your life, nor can you be given a livelihood that is not for you. Remember that this life consists of two days: a day for you and a day against you, and that the world is a house changing authorities. Whatever in it is for you will come to you despite your weakness, and whatever in it turns against you cannot be brought back despite your strength.*52

Inviting Abdullah to take part in his war against Mu’awiyah, Imam Ali (‘a) sent him the following letter:

*Now, send to me all the Muslims and believers from your side, remind them of my favors to them, my amnesty, and my role in their survival, awaken their desires for jihad, and mention to them the merits that they will gain from participation in jihad.*53

False Accusations

Some historicists have accused Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas of embezzling the public treasury of Al-Basrah, providing as evidence a number of letters that are reported to have been sent by Imam Ali (‘a) to him. However, it is not improbable that these letters were fabricated by the enemies so as to deform the good reputation of Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas.

Moreover, other reference books of history of Islam have invented many stories about the treachery of Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas, the best of which was that he gave back what he had taken from the public treasury![54]

In fact, the conduct and history of Abdullah prove the falsity of such accusations; he assumed the mission of resisting the enemies of the Imam (‘a) and refuted any argument that was arisen against him. He was the first to pray for the Imam (‘a) from the minbar. He felt so sorry for the passing away of the Imam (‘a) and wept for him so heavily that he lost his sight.

Finally, Imam Ali (‘a) used to praise and say the most laudatory words about Abdullah. Once, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

How excellent Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas is! Verily, he can see the unseen through a transparent curtain.[55]

Al-Baghdadi, a famous historicist and man of letters, states that Imam Ali (‘a) employed Abu’l-Aswad Al-Du'ali as the deputy governor of Al-Basrah after Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas.[56]

Ziyad Ibn ‘Ubayd

Ziyad ibn ‘Ubayd Al-Rumi was appointed as the deputy governor of Al-Basrah by Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas.[57]

After the martyrdom of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr, Mu'awiyah ordered Abdullah Al-Hadrami to go to Al-Basrah and rally its people against Imam Ali ('a), because the majority of the people of Al-Basrah believed that 'Uthman was killed wrongfully. Many of them therefore responded to the vicious call of Al Hadrami and declared rebellion.

Having feared for himself from these rebels, Ziyad wrote a letter to Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, informing him of the situation, and Abdullah, in his turn, sent a letter to Imam Ali ('a) who, consequently, asked the people of Al-Kufah to stand against the rebellion, but they were too reluctant to respond to him.

A'yan ibn Dabi'ah Al-Mujashi'i took upon himself the mission of warding off that rebellion; therefore, Imam Ali ('a) ordered him to go to Al-Basrah and gave him the following letter to be handed over to Ziyad:

Now, I have sent A'yan ibn Dabi'ah to make his people separate from Al-Hadrami. So, you may keep an eye on that: if you see that A'yan will do the mission perfectly and be able to separate these rabbles, then this is what we would love to take place. If these people insist on defiance and disobedience, then you may order those who obey you to fight against those who disobey.

If you are the victorious, then this is what we expect from you; otherwise, you may stall and delay them, because very soon will the batTalibons of Muslims come to you. Through them, Allah will kill the mischief-makers and the wrongdoers, and will grant victory to the rightful believers.[58]

In Al-Basrah, A'yan delivered the letter to Ziyad who read it and commented, 'Indeed, I hope I will be released from this responsibility.'

A'yan then met with the people of his tribe and warned them against rebellion. When they responded to him, he led them to encounter Al-Hadrami. They thus engaged in many disputes against

the followers of Al-Hadrami. Although Ziyad too wanted to fight against the rebels, he finally changed his mind.

He then sent a letter to Imam Ali ('a) informing him of the ambush that was laid against A'yan by the rebels and suggesting that the Imam ('a) would send Jariyah ibn Qudamah to deal with the matter.

Responding to Ziyad's suggestion, Imam Ali ('a) ordered Jariyah to go to Al- Basrah and gave him the following letter to read it before the people:

From the servant of Allah, Ali, the Leader of the Believers,

To every Muslim and believer who inhabits Al-Basrah and before whom this letter is read:

Peace be with you all. Now, Allah is too Forbearing and Forgiving to hasten His punishment before the completion of evidence (against the wrongdoer). He never overtakes a sinful for the first sign of sinning. Rather, He accepts repentance, extends His forbearance, and consents to turning to Him, because this will confirm the argument and open all doors for excuses.

Because of the mutiny of the majority of you, O people, you deserved to be punished. However, I have pardoned the criminals, held back my sword from striking the absconders, admitted the remorse of those who came to me regretful, and accepted your pledge of allegiance to me. If you now fulfill your pledge to me, accept my advices, and keep to obedience to me, I will then act upon the Book of Allah, the traditions of the Prophet, and the truth in dealing with you and I will thus lead you to the path of true guidance.

By Allah, I do not know any other ruler, save the Messenger of Allah (S), who can be more knowledgeable and more practical than I am in acting upon these matters. I say this truthfully while I do not intend to dispraise the past rulers or to find fault with their conducts. However, if the perishing whims and the unjust and foolish opinions of you make you

pace towards disagreeing with and defying me, then my horses are drawn near to you and my saddles are made ready for fighting you.

By Allah, if you force me to march militarily towards you, I will then impose upon you such catastrophic strikes that the strikes that you have received in the Battle of the Camel will be only one sup of it. However, I expect that you, by the will of Allah, will not make me do such things to yourselves.

I have written this letter to you in advance so that it will be an argument against you and after it, I will not write any other letter if you deem cheating my advice to you and contend withmy courier. However, if you do, I myself will come to fight you, by the will of Allah the All-exalted.[59]

Another Letter To Ziyad

Imam Ali ('a) was informed that Ziyad acted haughtily towards people and ate different kinds of food in one meal; he therefore sent him the following advice-giving epistle:

Sa'd has mentioned that you reviled at him wrongfully, threatened him, and rejected him haughtily and arrogantly. What has made you behave snootily? The Messenger of Allah (S) said, 'Pride is the dress of Allah. He who contends with Allah to strip Him of His dress will be shattered by Him.'

Sa'd has also told me that you eat various colors of food on one day and you use oil everyday. What will harm you if you observe fasting for the sake of Allah several days, give some of what you possess as alms seeking the reward of Allah, and eat simple meals? Verily, this is the slogan of the righteous people.

While you are wallowing in blissful life and using the graces for yourself rather than for the neighbors, the poor, the feeble, the destitute, the widows, and the orphans, do you expect that you will be awarded the wages of the almsgivers?

Sa'd has also told me that you use the language of the pious people while you do the actions of the sinful! If you have really done so, then you have first of all wronged yourself and caused your deeds to be frustrated. Now, you must repent to your Lord so that He will set aright your deeds.

You must also incline to economy and moderation in your affairs and offer the surplus of the graces that you are enjoying to your Lord to be recompensed on the day of your need. You may use oil once every two days at least, but do not use it on a daily basis, because I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, ***'Use oil from time to time, but do not use it everyday.'*** 60

Warning Ziyad Against Mu'awiyah

Mu'awiyah was infuriated by Ziyad who had done his jobs perfectly; therefore, he sent him a menacing letter. Once he received Mu'awiyah's letter, Ziyad delivered a speech in which he belittled Mu'awiyah and threatened that he would face him with all forces he had.

Ziyad then sent a letter to Imam Ali ('a), informing him of the situation. Replying him, Imam Ali ('a) wrote the following letter:

I entrusted with you this office because I had already known for sure that you deserve it and you can do your jobs perfectly. In the reign of 'Umar, Abu-Sufyan invented a slip out of his arrogance and his lying to himself. So, his claim was too false to be regarded. Mu'awiyah is indeed like Satan the accursed; he attacks people from the front, the rear, the right, and the left sides. So, beware of him! Beware of him! Beware of him! 61

Hudhayfah Al-Yamani

Hudhayfah Al-Yamani was one of the most prominent companions of the Holy Prophet (S). He had the capability of distinguishing the hypocrites; he therefore was known as the keeper of the secrets. Due to his strong ties with Imam Ali ('a), he used to spread his virtues and merits.

When Imam Ali (‘a) appointed him as the deputy governor of Al-Mada'in, he sent to him the following epistle:

In the Name of Allah the All-beneficent, the All-merciful (I begin). From the servant of Allah, Ali, the Leader of the Believers,

To Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman:

Now, I am entrusting with you the same office that you had held in the time of the one who was before me; namely, the administration of the affairs of Al-Mada'in. I now commission you to run the works of the tributes, the villages, and the affairs of the Dhimmis.

You may now gather around you those whom you trust and those whom you love from among the people whose faith and honesty are consented by you so that you will employ them as your assistants in the carrying out of your jobs, because this will bring more power to your ruler and you and will impose more suppression on your enemy.

I then order you to fear Allah and obey Him in secret and open affairs. I also beware you of His chastisement for things that you do covertly or overtly. I advance to you that you should act charitably to the good-doers and harshly to the stubborn.

I also order you to lean on lenience in all of your affairs and on fair judgment and justice in your dealing with your subjects, for you will certainly be answerable for that. Give the oppressed their dues fairly, pardon people, and behave nicely as much as you can, because Allah will reward the good-doers.

I order you to collect the land taxes on the strength of truth and fairness. Do not exceed what I have ordered you to do, do not leave any of your missions imperfectly done, and do not invent any matter on your own.

Then, you must distribute the funds of the taxes equitably and fairly among the beneficiaries, make yourself gentle to your subjects, treat them equally when they are in your presence, apply the truth to the close and

the faraway equally, judge between people with the truth, and distribute their dues among them equally.

You must neither follow your personal whims nor fear the censure of any censurer in matters related to Allah, because Allah is verily with those who fear Him and those who are good- doers.

I have sent this letter to you so that you will recite it before the people of your governorate and they will realize our view about them and about all Muslims. You must then gather themand read the letter before them. Make the young and the old among them to pledge allegiance to us, by the will of Allah. 62

Imam Ali (‘a) sent another letter to the people of Al-Mada'in and ordered Hudhayfah to read it before them all. The letter reads as follows:

In the Name of Allah the All-beneficent, the All-merciful (I begin).

From the servant of Allah, Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Leader of the Believers,

To every Muslim who is informed of this letter of mine:

Peace be upon you all! In your presence, I praise Allah save Whom there is no god and invoke His blessings upon Muhammad and his Household. Allah the All-exalted has chosen Islam to be the religion of Him, His angels, and His messengers as indication of His well-compacted making, excellent management, and regard for His servants.

He has given Islam exclusively to those whom He loves from amongst His created beings. He thus sent to them Muhammad who taught them the Book and wisdom as a sign of honor and mark of favor to this community.

He then educated them so that they would find the true guidance, united them so that they would not separate from one another, and informed them (of His rewards for the obedience and His punishment for the disobedient) so that they would not act partially. When the Messenger ac-

complished what was obligatory upon him to accomplish, he left towards the mercy of Allah, praiseworthy and praised.

After him, some Muslims appointed two men after they had consented to their methods of guidance and conduct. The two men lived as long as Allah willed and then He, the Almighty and All-majestic, received them through death. After them, they appointed the third man who created some events and the community found fault with him due to some of his acts. They therefore agreed on deposing him. They then bore a grudge against him and changed him.

Like horses following each other hurriedly, they then came to me and swore allegiance. I only beseech Allah to make me follow His true guidance and seek His help to make me steadfast on piety.

Behold! What is obligatory upon us towards you is that we should act upon the Book of Allah and the traditions of His Prophet (S), should rule over you according to our duties towards Him and the duty of making his traditions effective and active amongst you, and should act sincerely towards you whether you are present or absent. From Allah alone we seek help in this respect. Allah is surely sufficient to us and He is the best disposer of affairs.

I have entrusted Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman with the management of your affairs, for he is one of those who follow the true guidance in an accepted manner and whose righteousness is expected by me. I have ordered him to behave well with the upright ones among you, to be harsh towards the suspicious ones, and to be lenient to your community.

Finally, I beseech Allah to grant you and me the best choices, true following of Islam, and a vast amount of His mercy in this world and the other world.
Peace and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you. 63

Sa'd Ibn Mas'ud

After the passing away of Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman, Imam Ali (‘a) appointed Sa’d ibn Mas’ud, one of his virtuous companions, as the deputy governor of Al-Mada'in and wrote the following epistle to him:

Now, as you have defrayed the taxes imposed upon you, obeyed your Lord, and won the consent of your leader, you acted just like the upright, pious, and honest people. May Allah forgive your sins, accept your efforts, and grant you an excellent final abode! 64

When the Imam (‘a) decided to fight against Mu’awiyah, he sent the following letter to Sa’d ibn Mas’ud:

I have sent to you Ziyad ibn Ha•fah so that you will send to me the warriors from among the people of Al-Kufah as soon as you can, by the will of Allah. There is no power save with Allah. 65

This letter reveals that Sa’d was one of the reliable heroes of Islam; therefore, Imam Ali (‘a) sought his help in fighting against Mu’awiyah, the insolent foe of the Imam.

‘Ajlan Ibn Qudamah

Imam Ali (‘a) appointed ‘Ajlan ibn Qudamah as his deputy governor of Kaskar, a city between Al-Kufah and Al-Basrah. The Imam (‘a) sent the following epistle to ‘Ajlan:

Now, you may send the funds of Allah, because they are the dues of Muslims and you are not allowed to take a share of them more than the share of any other Muslim. O son of Qudamah, never think that you are allowed to dispose of the funds of Kaskar as same as you act freely with a fund that you have inherited from your father or mother. Now, hurry up in bringing these funds and come to us as soon as you can, by the will of Allah. 66

Sulayman Ibn Surad

Imam Ali (‘a) appointed Sulayman ibn Surad Al-Khuza’i, one of his brilliant devotees, to the office of the deputy governorship of Al-Jabal and wrote to him the following epistle:

You have made a reference to the dues of Muslims that are now under your disposition. The people of your and our countries are equally rightful to have a share in these funds; therefore, you may inform me about the amounts, give the beneficiaries their dues, and send the rest to us so that we will distribute it among the people of our country, by the will of Allah. 67

Land Taxes

Significance Of Land Taxes

In his famous epistle to Malik Al-Ashtar, Imam Ali (‘a) referred to the significance of the land taxes, saying,

Look after the revenue affairs in such a way that those engaged in it remain prosperous because in their prosperity lies the prosperity of all others. The others cannot prosper without them, because all people are dependent on revenue and its payers. 68

Instructions To The Tax Collectors

Establishing the moral and administrative basics of tax collecting, Imam Ali (‘a) sent the following epistle to his functionaries:

From the servant of Allah Ali the Leader of the Believers to the tax collectors:

So now, he who does not fear where he is going does not send forward for himself that which could protect him, while he who follows his personal whims and seeks after them, although they will drive him into a disadvantageous end result will very soon be one of the remorseful.

Behold! The happiest of all people in this world is he who turns away from matters whose damages are recognized, but the most wretched of them all is he who follows his own lusts. Now, you should learn lessons and know that you will win the reward of the good deeds that you do.

As for anything else, you will wish that between it and you there were a long duration of time; and Allah makes you to be cautious of retribution from Himself; and Allah is Compassionate to the servants.

You will unavoidably undergo the bad results of whatever you have neglected.

You should know that the obligations laid on you are few, while their reward is much. Even if there had been no fear of punishment for revolt and disobedience, which Allah has prohibited, the reward in keeping aloof from it would be enough incentive to abstain from going after it. Show mercy to people so that you will be shown mercy.

Do not overburden people. Behave yourselves justly with them and act with endurance with regard to their needs, because you are the treasurers of the people, representatives of the community, and ambassadors of the leaders.

Do not use doormen (who prevent people from meeting you) and do not deter anyone from presenting his request so that they may refrain from presenting them to you. Do not punish some people for crimes committed by others except in cases of sponsorship. Tame yourselves to patience so that you will win prosperity-driving results. Beware of postponing your jobs and repelling the good deeds; lest, you will be sorry.

Do not deprive anyone of his needs and do not prevent him from securing his requirements. [69]

For the collection of land taxes from the people, do not sell their winter or summer clothes, nor cattle with which they work, nor slaves. Do not whip anyone for the sake of one dirham. Do not touch the property of any person whether he be one who prays (i.e. a Muslim) or a protected unbeliever, unless you find a horse or weapons used for attacks against Mus-

lims, because it is not proper for Muslims to leave these things in the hands of the enemies of Islam to enable them to have power over Islam.

Do not deny good counsel to yourself, good behavior to the army, succor to the subjects, and strength to the religion of Allah. Strive in the way of Allah as is obligatory on you, because Allah the Glorified desires us and you to be thankful to Him as best as we can and that we should help Him to the best of our power. There is no power save with Allah the All-high the All-glorious. 70

Reproaching And Deposing Deputy Governors

Reproaching one of his officers after the people had complained about him, Imam Ali (‘a) sent him the following epistle:

Now, the cultivators 71 *of your city have complained of your strictness, hardheartedness, humiliating treatment, and harshness. I thought over it and found that since they are unbelievers, they cannot be brought near nor kept away or treated severely because of the pledge with them. Behave with them in-between strictness and softness and adopt for them a mingling or remoteness and aloofness with nearness and closeness if Allah so wills.* 72

Some of the agents that Imam Ali (‘a) had employed to watch over his deputy governors, informed him that Al-Nu’man ibn ‘Ajlan, the deputy governor of Bahrain, had misused the public funds. As a result, Imam Ali (‘a) sent him the following epistle:

He who belittles the trust, desires for treachery, and does not behave honestly with regard to himself and his faith has in fact behaved badly against himself in this world, while what he will encounter as a consequence of misbehavior in this world will be in the other world bitterer, more enduring, more miserable, and most sustained.

So, fear Allah, for you belong to a clan that is known for uprightness of its members. Act according to the good opinion that is had about you, reconsider your affairs if what has been informed to be against you is true,

do not make me change my view about you, clean up the land taxes you have levied, and then write to me the conclusions of all that, so that I will tell you what to do, by the will of Allah. 73

- 1. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 7:36-7.
- 2. Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi, Nisam Al-Hukm wa'l-Idarah fi'l-Islam (System of Rule and Administration in Islam), pp. 360.
- 3. Ibn Qutaybah, 'Uyun Al-Akhbar 1:1.
- 4. Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi, Nisam Al-Hukm wa'l-Idarah fi'l-Islam (System of Rule and Administration in Islam), pp. 361-2.
- 5. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:224.
- 6. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:227.
- 7. Al-Bayhaqi, Al-Sunan Al-Kubra 4:115.
- 8. Sahih Al-Bukhari 2:789.
- 9. Al-Qalqashandi, Subh Al-A'sha 2:325.
- 10. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 25.
- 11. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 40.
- 12. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 1:211.
  Imam Ali ('a) then decide to remove him from his office and sent him the following epistle:
  'In the Name of Allah; the All-beneficent, the All-merciful.
  'Clear proof indeed has come to you from your Lord; therefore, give full measure and weight and do not diminish to men their things, and do not make mischief in the land. What remains with Allah is better for you if you are believers, and I am not a keeper over you.' Once you receive this letter of mine, suspend all of your deeds that we have entrusted with you so that one, who will take your place, will come to you.'
- 13. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 71.
- 14. Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi, Nisam Al-Hukm wa'l-Idarah fi'l-Islam (System of Rule and Administration in Islam), pp. 441.
- 15. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Isabah 3/239.
- 16. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Isabah 3/239.
- 17. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:137.
- 18. Ibn Taghri, Al-Nujum Al-Zahirah 1:100.
- 19. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 38.

- 20. This is a reference to the saying of the Holy Prophet (S) about the children of Umayyah and the children of Abu'l-'As ibn Umayyah the grandfather of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and the dynasty of Marwan who became caliphs. The Holy Prophet's predictive saying was related by Abu-Dharr Al-Ghifari. It reads as follows:
  When the number of the children of Umayyah reaches forty men, they will make Allah's people their slaves, grab Allah's funds as their own property, and make the Book of Allah a cause of corruption.
  (See Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 4:479; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi,
  Kanz Al-'Ummal 11:149.)
  About the children of Abu'l-'As, it is related by Abu-Dharr Al-Ghifari, Abu-Sa'id Al-Khidri, Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, Abu-Hurayrah, and many other reporters of Prophetic traditions that the Holy Prophet (S) said,
  When the number of the children of Abu'l-'As reaches thirty men, they will grab the funds of Allah as their own property, make Allah's people their slaves, and make the religion of Allah a cause of corruption.
  (See Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 3:80; Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al- Sahihayn 4:480; Ibn Hajar, Al-MaTalibb Al-Aliyah 4:332; Al-Haythami, Majma' Al-Zawa'id
  5:241,243; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 11:148,149,351,354.)
  The history of Islam, after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S), has enough points of evidence to prove the accuracy of this Prophetic prediction; therefore, the fear of Imam Ali ('a) for the Muslim community was based on this reason.
- 21. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 62.
- 22. Tarikh At-Tabari 6:255; Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:153.
- 23. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:29.
- 24. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-'Amili, Al-Ghadir 9:40.
- 25. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 27.

- 26. Tarikh Al-Tabari 5:231; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:25.
- 27. Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 3:60; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:284; Ibn Sa'd, Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra 3:15; Ibn Muzahim Al-Minqari, Waq'at Siffin, pp. 119.
- 28. Ibn Taghri, Al-Nujum Al-Zahirah 1:110.
- 29. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 68.
- 30. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 35.
- 31. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 33.
- 32. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 67.
- 33. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 70.
- 34. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:103.
- 35. Tarikh Ibn Wadih 2:190.
- 36. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:201.
- 37. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 26.
- 38. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Kitab Siffin, pp. 104.
- 39. Muhammad Baqir Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 5:156.
- 40. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:420.
- 41. Tarikh Al-Tabari 6:65-77.
  About the story of Masqalah's flight to Mu'awiyah, historicists state that when Al-Khirrit ibn Rashid Al-Naji, one of the chiefs of the Khawarij, started making mischief in the land after he had criticized Imam Ali ('a) for the event of the arbitration; thus rallying people against the Imam ('a), and his people from the tribe of Banu-Najiyah, who were Christians, joined him and broke the conditions of protection under the Muslim State, he started spreading horror and mischief among people.

  Imam Ali ('a) therefore mobilized a batTalibon of his army to fight against Al-Khirrit and his followers. Under the commandership of Ma'qil, the Imam's troops could catch Al-Khirrit in a region in Persia, killing him and a good number of his followers, and taking the others as captives. Among these captives, there were women and children the voices of whose cries affected Masqalah emotionally; he therefore de-

cided to free them for an amount of money that he committed to pay. However, he paid part of the amount and could not pay the other part. Accordingly, he had to flee to Mu'awiyah in the darkness of one night.

About the flight of Masqalah, Imam Ali ('a) said, 'Shame on Masqalah! He acted like masters and fled like slaves! He thus did not give any opportunity to anyone to praise him. Had he kept himself there, we would have been lenient to him with regard to the payment of his debts and we would have granted him respite until he would be able to pay off.'

However, Masqalah regretted his situation very much and expressed his sorrow in some poetic verses. (Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:264-71.)

- 42. Yaqut Al-Hamawi, Mu'jam Al-Buldan 5:483.
- 43. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 61.
- 44. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah 1:91; Nasr ibn Muzahim, Kitab Siffin, pp. 20.
- 45. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:176.
- 46. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab 3:90.
- 47. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 45.
- 48. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 9:312.
- 49. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:18.
- 50. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:63-4; Tarikh Al-Tabari 5:31; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 3:107.
- 51. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib1:327.
- 52. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 72.
- 53. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 8:471.
- 54. Al-Mawardi, Adab Al-Din wa'l-Dunya, pp. 64.
- 55. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 2:363.
- 56. Al-Baghdadi, Khuzanat Al-Adab 1:281.
- 57. Many scholars have wondered why Imam Ali ('a) had accepted Ziyad in this office and had not deposed him although Ziyad had no legitimate father so that he was known as Ziyad ibn Abih (i.e. the son of his father) and that Mu'awiyah, depending upon the testimony of one of the most notorious

panders in the pre-Islamic era, claimed Ziyad to have been his illegitimate brother! In fact, according to the principles of the Islamic law, Ziyad must have been the son of 'Ubayd Al-Rumi because Ziyad's mother Sumayyah, even though proved to have committed adultery with Abu-Sufyan and others, was the wife of 'Ubayd; therefore, a child is attached to his father according to the Prophetic tradition: 'The child is for the owner of the bed (on which his mother was impregnated), while the share of the adulteress is nothing but stoning.'

- 58. Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 5:160.
- 59. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:50; Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:182.
- 60. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 16:196.
- 61. Abd Al-Qadir Badran, Tahdhib Tarikh Ibn 'Asakir 5:410.
- 62. Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:19.
- 63. Sayyid Ali Khan, Al-Darajat Al-Rafi'ah, pp. 288.
- 64. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:176.
- 65. Tarikh Al-Tabari 4:59.
- 66. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf, pp. 338.
- 67. Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 5:351.
- 68. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 53.
- 69. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Kitab Siffin, pp. 108.
- 70. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 52.
- 71. These people were Magians. That is why the treatment of Imam Ali's officer with them was not the same as with Muslims. Disgusted with this, they wrote a letter of complaint to the Imam ('a) and spoke of the officer's harshness. In reply, the Imam ('a) wrote to his officer that he should meet out treatment to them in which there should be neither harshness nor such leniency which they may exploit to create mischief, because if they are let loose, they will be involved in machinations against the government and disturb the country's administration by creating one mischief or the other, while a

wholly repressive policy cannot be justified, because they are counted among the subjects and their rights as such cannot be ignored.

- 72. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Epistle No. 19.
- 73. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:177.

Martyrdom Of Imam 'Ali´

A group of the Khawarij went to Makkah to perform the ritual Hajj pilgrimage. Upon the accomplishment of the rites, they held a conference in which they discussed the current affairs of the Muslim community and the gross events that led to shedding the blood of many Muslims.

They ascribed these events to three persons; Imam Ali ('a), Mu'awiyah, and 'Amr ibn Al-'As. They thus concluded that these three persons should be assassinated. Abd Al-Rahman ibn Muljim took upon himself the task of assassinating Imam Ali ('a). The conferees then specified a certain time to accomplish their missions, which was the night of the eighteenth of Ramadan at the very hour of the Dawn Prayer.

The Umayyads And The Assassination Of Imam Ali

Although historicists ascribe the assassination of Imam Ali ('a) to the Khawarij alone, a thorough reflection on the issue proves that the Umayyads had a role in the process. The following points may support this idea:

1) Abu'l-Aswad Al-Du'ali, one of the elite disciples of Imam Ali ('a), held the Umayyads responsible for assassinating the Imam ('a). He composed some poetic verses in which he accused Mu'awiyah of making Muslims suffer the loss of Imam Ali ('a). 1 However, it may be argued that Abu'l-Aswad ascribed this mur-

der to Mu'awiyah because he was the reason behind the advent and mutiny of the Khawarij against the Imam's government.

Therefore, all the sins and crimes that the Khawarij committed are basically attributed to Mu'awiyah.

2) Nu'man Al-Misri, a famous historicist, states, 'Mu'awiyah is said to have bought off Ibn Muljim and bribed him to kill the Imam ('a).' 2

3) Historicists confirm that Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays, who used to spy on Imam Ali ('a) for the Umayyads, contributed greatly to the process of assassinating the Imam ('a). He accompanied and encouraged Ibn Muljim to commit his crime. A few moments before murdering the Imam ('a), Al-Ash'ath shouted at Ibn Muljim, 'Hurry up! The light of morning will soon disclose you!'

It is known that the planning for assassinating the Imam ('a) was kept so secret that none except a few people knew about it. Now, we wonder how Al-Ash'ath knew about it! To answer, Al-Ash'ath must have been informed by the Umayyads about the details of the process.

4) The conference of the Khawarij was held in Makkah, the center of the Umayyads. During that season of the Hajj pilgrimage, they spread rumors against the Imam ('a); therefore, the Umayyads must have met with the Khawarij and incited them to assassinate him.

Besides, Abd Al-Rahman ibn Muljim, along with other persons from the Khawarij, resided in Makkah for several months after that, which means that he must have met the Umayyads.

5) Ibn Muljim was a teacher of the Quran and he used to receive an ordinary allowance from the public treasury, 3 which means that he was not wealthy enough to buy a sword with one thousand golden coins and poison with another one thousand golden coins as well as a slave and a songstress. We thus wonder how he

could collect three thousand golden coins and paid them as dowry to Qatam. This proves that he received these funds from the Umayyads as a wage for assassinating the Imam (‘a).

6) Ibn Muljim had good relationship with ‘Amr ibn Al-’As. He participated with ‘Amr in the conquest of Egypt and the latter ordered him to reside next to him. 4 In conclusion, Ibn Muljim must have told ‘Amr about the plan of the Khawarij; therefore, ‘Amr did not leave his house at the night of the assassination.

Imam Ali And Ibn Muljim

Imam Ali (‘a) was undoubtedly sure that Abd Al-Rahman ibn Muljim would assassinate him. Historicists says that Ibn Muljim came to the Imam (‘a) and pledged allegiance to him with the others who pledged their allegiance, and withdrew from him. Then, the Imam (‘a) called him back and advised him to be trustworthy and to be sure that he was not treacherous and did not break his oath.

He did that (promised to keep his word), then he withdrew. A second time, the Imam (‘a) called him back and asked him to be trustworthy and to be sure that he was not treacherous and did not break his oath. Ibn Muljim said, ‘By God, O Amir Al-Mu'minin, I have not seen you do this with anyone else except me.’ However, the Imam (‘a) refrained from answering him.

Then, the Imam (‘a) cited this poetic verse:

I want his friendship and he wants my death.

The one who makes excuses to you is one of your bosom friends from (the tribe of) Murad.

Then, the Imam (‘a) continued,

Go, Ibn Muljim! I do not think that you will keep your word.

According to another narration, it is related from Ja'far ibn Sulayman Al-Åab'I on the authority of Al-Mu'alla ibn Ziyad who said:

Abd Al-Rahman ibn Muljim came to Imam Ali ('a) to ask to be provided with a horse. The Imam ('a) turned toward him and said, *'You are Abd Al-Rahman ibn Muljim Al-Muradi. Are you not?'*

'Yes, I am,' he replied.

The Imam then said to Ghazwan, *'Provide him with the roan.'*

That man came with a roan horse and Ibn Muljim mounted it and took its reins. After he had gone away, the Imam ('a) said, 'I want his friendship' etc' 5

One day, Imam Ali ('a) was delivering a speech from the minbar when Ibn Muljim, threatening the Imam ('a), said in a low voice, 'By Allah, I will give these people rest from you!' One of the attendants could hear him and arrest him. When he was brought before the Imam ('a), he ordered them to release him, saying,

He has not yet killed me!

Before that, when Ibn Muljim came to Al-Kufah, he met one of his acquaintances who had in his house a good-looking harlot named Qatam whose brother and father were killed by Imam Ali ('a) in the Battle of Al- Nahrawan. Upon seeing her, Ibn Muljim was charmed by her. He betrothed her and she agreed on condition that her dowry would be three thousand silver coins, a page, a domestic servant, and the killing of Imam Ali ('a).

The filthy Ibn Muljim accepted and told her that he was in Al-Kufah for no reason other than killing the Imam ('a). She thus helped him do this mission.

Qatam then offered to find people who would help Ibn Muljim execute his plan and assassinate the Imam ('a). She therefore sent for Wirdan ibn Khalid, a man from the tribe of Taym Al-Rabab, and informed him about her determination to assassinate the Imam

(‘a). She also asked him to help Ibn Muljim do this mission. Wirdan immediately agreed.

Ibn Muljim then visited a man for the tribe of Ashja’, who was one of the Khawarij, named Shabib ibn Bahirah and asked, ‘I offer to you the honor of this world and the other world!’ The man asked, ‘What is that exactly?’ Ibn Muljim answered, ‘It is that you should help me kill Ali.’ The man responded and they both went to Qatam and told her that they had agreed to assassinate the Imam (‘a). She thanked and encouraged them to go on. 6

The Assassination

The new moon of the holy month of Ramadan, in which Almighty Allah revealed the Holy Quran as mercy and guidance for all people, came into view and Imam Ali (‘a) was in no doubt that he would depart from this world and join the Sacred Yard during this month. He thus worked harder and broke his fast with three bites of a single loaf of barley bread and crushed salt.

He spent the entire night with acts of worship and prayers. He besought Almighty Allah earnestly to save him from the community that had denied his true standing and treated with contempt his values and principles. What increased the Imam’s yearning for meeting Almighty Allah was the mutiny and rebellion of his army after they had been split apart by the personal whims and decayed by the spiteful rumors.

Reporters state that at the nineteenth night of Ramadan, Imam Ali (‘a) felt the affliction of the calamity. He was overwhelmed by grief and sorrow while he was repeating these words:

By Allah, I have not lied nor have I been lied to. It is the night, which I was promised. 7

At that night, he recollected the moments of his struggle in the presence of the Holy Prophet (S) and the other moments of his

sufferings at the hands of the polytheist people of Quraysh.

Let us now read the whole story as reported by the Imam's daughter, Lady Ummu-Kulthum. She is reported to have said,

At the nineteenth night of Ramadan, I served my father with a plate that contained two loaves of barley bread, a bowl of milk, and a quantity of crushed salt. When he accomplished his prayer, he sat down to break his fast. When he saw what I had served him, he nodded his head, wept, and said to me,

I never thought that I would see any daughter treating her father as improperly as you have just done!

I (Ummu-Kulthum) asked, 'How is that, father?'

He said,

How come do you serve me with two colors of food in one meal? Do you want me to stop before Almighty Allah on the Resurrection Day (for interrogation) for a longer time? I only want to pattern after the example of my brother and cousin, the Messenger of Allah (S). He had never been served with two kinds of food in one meal until his soul was grasped by Almighty Allah. O daughter, whoever has pleasant food, drink, and clothing will stand for a long time before Allah the Almighty and All-majestic on the Resurrection Day.

O daughter, the legal stuff of this world brings about settlement to account while the illegal stuff brings about punishment. My dear brother, the Messenger of Allah (S), has told me that Archangel Gabriel once descended to him carrying the keys to the treasures of the earth and said,

'O Muhammad, Allah, the source of peace, sends greetings to you and says that if you wish, He will change the mountains of Tihamah into gold and silver for you. You may now take these keys of the treasures of the earth and this will not decrease what is hoarded for you on the Resurrection Day.'

However, the Holy Prophet (S) said, **'O Gabriel, what will be next? '** *The archangel answered, 'Death will be next.' The Holy Prophet (S) said,* **'I have no need for this world. Let me feel hungry a day and satiate myself another day. On the day when I feel hungry, I will beseech my Lord earnestly. On the day when I am sated, I thank and praise my Lord.'**

Gabriel said, 'O Muhammad, May you be led to every prosperity!'

My father ('a) then added,

O daughter, this is the abode of seduction and humility. Whoever does any act will eventually face its consequence.

O daughter, I will not eat anything before you remove one of the two foods.

When I did, my father ate one loaf of barley bread with some salt. He then praised and thanked Almighty Allah. Thereafter, he engaged himself in prayer once again. He kept on offering prayers and beseeching Allah the All- glorified incessantly. He came out and in the house repeatedly while he was looking at the sky worriedly.

He then recited the entire Surah Yasin (No. 36). He then slept for a few moments and woke up panic-stricken. He wiped his face with his dress, stood up on his feet, and prayed to Almighty Allah, saying,

O Allah, please bless us in the affair of meeting You.

He also repeated frequently the statement of

la hawla wala quwwata illa billahi Al-'aliyyi Al-'asim (There is neither might nor power except with Allah the All-high and All-great).

He then returned to offering prayers for a few hours and then to say the post- prayer litanies and doxologies. He then slept for a

few moments and woke up panic-stricken.

He then ordered his sons and daughters to gather around him, and said to them,

In this month, you will lose me. I have just seen a dream that horrified me.

I asked, 'What have you seen?'

He ('a) answered,

In my sleep, I have seen the Messenger of Allah (S) saying to me, 'O Abu'l-Hasan, you will very soon come to us. The most wretched of all people will come to you to dye your gray-haired beard with the blood of your head. I am truly eager to see you. On the last ten days of Ramadan, you will be with us.'

These words made us all weep heavily. However, my father ordered us to abide by patience and obedience to Almighty Allah.

At that night, he kept on offering prayers and he frequently went out of the house to look deeply to the sky and the stars, saying,

By Allah, I have not lied nor have I been lied to. It is the night, which I was promised.

He would then return to his prayer-place, repeating these words:

O Allah, please grant me blessings in death.

He again repeated very often the statement of

la hawla wala quwwata illa billahi Al-'aliyyi Al-'asim (There is neither mighty nor power except with Allah the All-high and All-great)

and the statement of invoking Allah's blessings upon the Holy Prophet (i.e. allahumma salli 'Ala muhammadin wa-ali muham-

mad).

I thus said to him, 'O father, why am I noticing that you cannot have a sleep at this night?'

He ('a) answered,

O daughter, your father has killed heroes and engaged in horrific situations without letting any spark of fear enter his heart. However, at this night, I feel such strange fear that I have never experienced before.

He then said,

We are Allah's and to Him shall we be returned.

These words (which are said at misfortunes) panicked me very much that I, weeping, asked him, 'What for have you been declaring your death since the beginning of this night?'

My father answered,

O daughter, the termination of my lifetime seems to have come near and any hope in surviving has been lost.

When I was terribly stricken by these words that I could not stop weeping, my father, trying to calm me down, said,

O daughter, I have not said these words of my own desire; rather, the Prophet (S) predicted that I would face my end under such circumstances. 8

In the darkest hours of that night, the Imam ('a) did not stop praying to Almighty Allah. He then performed the ritual ablution as perfectly as possible and readied himself for leaving the house for performing the ritual Dawn Prayer.

When he ('a) came to the courtyard of the house, the domesticated geese, which had been gifted to Imam Al-Hasan ('a), started shouting and swaying their wings. The Imam ('a) thus predicted

the infliction of the catastrophic misfortune; he therefore went on repeating the statement of **la hawla wala quwwata illa billahi Al-'aliyyi Al-'asim.** He added, 'These shouts will very soon be followed by lamentations. 9

Lady Ummu-Kulthum hurried to detain the geese, but the Imam ('a) said to her,

O daughter, I adjure you by your duty towards me to release these birds, because you have detained creatures that have no tongue and have no ability to express themselves when they feel hungry or thirsty. Take care of feeding them! If you cannot do that, then you must free them so that they find their food from the grass of the earth.

When the Imam ('a) reached near the door, he could not open it easily, because it was made of trunks of date-palm trees. When he could finally open it, his shawl was untied; he therefore tied it around his girdle while repeating these poetic verses:

Fasten you girdle for death, because death is coming before you. When death comes, do not show unease!

Just as time has made you laugh, so will it make you weep!

Upon the strange state of his father, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) panicked extremely and hurried towards him to ask, 'O father, what has made you leave the house at such an hour?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

I have seen a horrible dream.

Imam Al-Hasan ('a) said, 'May your dream be a source and an indication of prosperity! May you please tell me what you have seen?'

The Imam ('a) thus related,

In my dream, I saw that Gabriel descended from the heavens on Mount Abu-Qubays, picked up two rocks from there, brought them to the Holy Ka'bah, struck them with each other, and they became ashes, which entered each and every house in Makkah and Al-Madinah.

Panicked by this dream, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) asked, 'What is the interpretation of this dream?'

The Imam ('a) said,

If it is true dream, its interpretation will then be that your father will be soon killed, and grief for my death will enter each and every house in Makkah and Al-Madinah.

Imam Al-Hasan ('a) asked, 'When will that take place?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

Allah the All-exalted says, 'No one knows what he shall earn on the morrow and no one knows in what land he shall die.' However, my dear one, the Messenger of Allah ('a), foretold me that this would take place at one of the last nights of Ramadan. I will be assassinated by Abd Al- Rahman ibn Muljim.

Imam Al-Hasan ('a) said, 'As long as you have such information, then you must kill Ibn Muljim.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

It is illegal to reTalibate before the falling of the crime. Hence, the man has not yet committed his crime.

Imam Al-Hasan ('a) then insisted on accompanying his father to the mosque, but the father ('a) ordered him to return to his bed.

Imam Ali ('a) headed for the mosque and, as usual, started rousing from sleep the people who slept there. When he passed by some people, the Imam ('a) put his hand on his beard and said,

I believe that one of you is the most wretched person who will dye the hair of my beard with the blood of my head. 10

The Imam (‘a) then started offering the prayer. While he was in the prostration posture, Abd Al-Rahman ibn Muljim, accompanied by Shabib ibn Bahirah Al- Ashja’i, 11 struck the Imam (‘a) with his poisoned sword while repeating the slogan of the Khawarij, **‘There is no verdict but Allah’s.’**

Ibn Muljim hit the Imam (‘a) on the head so fiercely that the strike reached the Imam’s brain. Immediately, the Imam (‘a) shouted, *I have won. I swear it by the Lord of the Ka’bah.*

When the news was spread, people hurried to the mosque and found the Imam (‘a) thrown and bleeding in his niche. He was carried to his house and escorted with wails and lamentations.

The family members of the Imam (‘a) received him with cries and screams, but he ordered them to be patient and satisfied with the act of Almighty Allah. When he noticed the agonies of Imam Al-Hasan (‘a), he said to him,

O son, do not cry. You will be poisoned to death and your brother will be killed by swords.

The assassinator was arrested. Tied up and bare-headed, he was brought before Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) who said to him, ‘O accursed! You have killed the Leader of the Believers. Did he deserve such recompense from you after he had given you a place to live in and drawn you near him?’

Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) then turned his face to his father and said, ‘O father, this is the enemy of Allah and of you. This is the son of Muljim. Allah has made us arrest him.’

Imam Ali (‘a) opened his eyes and said to he assassinator with a faint voice,

You have committed a disastrous thing and a great crime. Have I not been kind to you? Have I not preceded you to others in the allowances? Why have you then recompensed me in such a way?

Imam Ali ('a) then turned his face toward his sons and instructed them to treat the criminal kindly. He said,

Give him food and drink. If I survive this, I am then the patron of reTalibation; I may kill him if I wish, and I may pardon if I wish. If I die, then you may reTalibate and kill him. Do not transgress, because Allah does not like the transgressors. 12

Astounded by this instruction, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) said,

O father, this accursed person has killed you, causing us calamity. Now, you order us to be lenient to him!

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

O son, we are the household of mercy and forgiveness. Serve him with the same food you eat and give him the same drink you drink. If I die, you may then reTalibate and kill him. Do not trample his body, for I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, 'Do not trample any body, even though it may be a rabid mad dog.' If I survive his strike, I will know best what to do with him. We-the Ahl Al-Bayt-increase nothing but pardon and generosity against those who commit sins against us.

Imam Ali's Last Wills

When physicians decided that the Imam ('a) would not survive the strike of Ibn Muljim, the Imam ('a) started to say his last wills to his sons. Bedridden, Imam Ali ('a) said to Imam Al-Hasan and Imam Al-Husayn ('a),

I advise you both to fear Allah and that you should not hanker after the pleasures of this world even though it may run after you. Do not be sorry for anything of this world that you have been denied. Speak the truth and

act in expectation for reward. Be an enemy of the oppressor and helper of the oppressed.

I advise you both and all my children and members of my family and everyone whom my writing reaches to fear Allah, to keep your affairs in order, and to maintain good relations among yourselves, for I have heard your grandfather the Holy Prophet (S) saying, **'Improvement of mutual differences is better than general prayers and fasting.'**

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of orphans. So, do not allow them to starve, and they should not be ruined in your presence.

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of your neighbors, because they were the subject of the Prophet's advice. He went on advising in their favor until we thought that he would allow them a share in inheritance.

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of the Quran. No one should excel you in acting upon it.

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of prayer, because it is the pillar of your religion.

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of your Lord's House (i.e. the Holy Ka'bah). Do not forsake it so long as you live, because if it is abandoned you will not be spared.

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of jihad with the help of your property, lives, and tongues in the way of Allah.

You should keep to a respect for kinship and spending for others. Avoid turning away from one another and severing mutual relations. Do not give up bidding for good and forbidding from evil lest the mischievous gain positions over you, and then if you will pray, the prayers will not be granted.

O sons of Abd Al-Muttalib, certainly I do not wish to see you plunging harshly into the blood of Muslims shouting that the Leader of the Believ-

ers has been killed. Beware! Do not kill on account of me except my killer.

Wait until I die by his (i.e. Ibn Muljim) existing stroke. Then, strike him one stroke for his stroke and do not dismember the limbs of the man, for I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, **'Avoid cutting limbs even though it may be a rabid dog .'** 13

On another occasion, Imam Ali ('a) expressed another will that was addressed to all people generally. In this will, he said,

O people, every one has to meet what he wishes to avoid by running away. Death is the place to which life is driving. To run away from it means to catch it. Too many are the days on which I spent in searching for the secret of this matter, but Allah did not allow save its concealment.

Alas! It is a treasured knowledge. As for my last will, it is that, concerning Allah, do not believe in a partner for Him, and, concerning Muhammad (S), do not disregard his traditions. Keep these two pillars and burn these two lamps. Until you are not divided, no evil will come to you.

Every one of you has to bear his own burden. It has been kept light for the ignorant. Allah is Merciful. Faith is straight. The leader (i.e. the Holy Prophet) is the holder of knowledge. Yesterday, I was with you; today, I have become the object of a lesson for you, and tomorrow, I shall leave you. Allah may forgive you and me!

If the foot remains firm in this slippery place, it is then well and good. But if the foot slips, this is because we are under the shade of branches, the passing of the winds, and the canopy of the clouds whose layers are dispersed in the sky, and whose traces disappeared in the earth. I was your neighbor.

My body kept you company for some days and shortly you will find just an empty body of mine which would be stationary after all its movements and silent after speech so that my calmness, the closing of my eyes, and the stillness of my limbs may provide you counsel, because it is more of a

counsel for those who take a lesson from it than eloquent speech and a ready word.

I am departing from you like one who is eager to meet someone. Tomorrow, you will look at my days, then my inner side will be disclosed to you and you will understand me after the vacation of my place and its occupation by someone else. 14

Instructing his elder son Imam Al-Hasan (‘a), Imam Ali (‘a) said these words at the last hours of his lifetime:

To begin with, I bear witness that there is no god save Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger and the choicest of His servants. He has selected him on the strength of His knowledge and accepted him on the strength of His choice. I also bear witness that Allah shall resurrect those who are in graves to interrogate them about their deeds, since He knows what is hidden in the hearts.

Now, O Hasan, I instruct you-and you are sufficiently the best one to observe my wills-the same instructions that the Messenger of Allah (S) had given to me. Do not consider the world to be your greatest concern.

O son, I instruct you to perform the prayers at their times, to defray the zakat (tax) to their beneficiaries and at their proper times, to keep silent at situations of suspicion, to be moderate and fair in situations of satisfaction and rage, to act kindly to the neighbors, to honor your guests, to show mercy to the aggrieved and misfortunate people, to regard good relations with your relatives, to love the poor people and to love sitting with them, to stick to modesty for it is the best of all devotional acts, to disregard expectations, to recollect death frequently, and to refrain from the worldly pleasures, because you are eventually subjected to death, exposed to misfortunes, and ridden be ailments.

I instruct you to fear Allah in your secret and open affairs. I warn you against rush in words and deeds. Whenever a matter related to the other world is presented before you, you must start with it; and whenever a matter related to this world is presented before you, you must slow down until you make sure that you will do it properly. Beware of situations of

accusation and suspicious sessions, because the evil acquaintance always seduces the one who associates with him.

O son, always work for Almighty Allah, deter from indecencies, enjoin the right, forbid the wrong, choose your friends according to the orders of Allah, bear love for the righteous people on account of their righteousness, hide your faith from the sinful ones, incur the animosity of these sinful ones in your heart, and contradict their acts, lest you will be like them. Beware of sitting in the public ways, and leave dispute and heated discussions with those who lack reason and knowledge.

O son, be moderate in your paces and pursue the reasonable course in your devotional acts by sticking yourself to the devotional act that you can always do. Keep on silence and you will be safe. Think deliberately before you proceed on any act so that you will win its achievement. Learn the good matters so that you will be knowledgeable. Be in a continuous state of remembering Allah under all circumstances.

Have mercy on the little ones of your family members and show respect to the old among them. Do not eat any food before you give part of it as alms. Persevere in fasting, for it is the alms of the body and the protective shield for those who observe it. Struggle against your self, watch out the one who sits with you, avoid your enemy, attend frequently the sessions of mentioning Almighty Allah, and pray Him as repeatedly as possible. Now, O my son, I have not failed to give you advice. This is the parting between you and me.

I also instruct you to treat your brother and the son of your father, Muhammad, kindly, because you know how much I love him. As for your (full) brother Al-Husayn, he is your mother's son and you do not need to hear my instructions concerning your brother Al-Husayn (because you are already aware of them).

May Allah be your guardian after me! I beseech Him to set aright all of your affairs and to save you from the tyrants and the transgressors. Abide by patience until Allah decides the matter. There is no power save with Allah the All-high and All-great. 15

Visitors Of The Imam

A group of the Imam's companions came to visit him at the final hours of his lifetime. Habib ibn 'Amr had the honor to see the Imam ('a). He gently said in his presence, 'Your wound is not deadly. You will recover health.'

The Imam ('a) however answered,

O Habib, I will very soon depart from you.

These words astounded Habib who could not stop weeping.

Upon hearing these words from her father, Lady Ummu-Kulthum wept heavily. The Imam ('a), addressing her, asked,

What for are you weeping?

She answered, 'How cannot I weep while I have heard you saying that you would very soon leave us?'

The Imam ('a) said,

O daughter, do not weep. By Allah, if you can only see what your father can see right now'

'O Leader of the Believers, what can you see now?' asked Habib. The Imam ('a) answered,

O Habib, I can see the angels of the heavens and the prophets standing on their feet one after another to receive me. I can also see my dear brother Muhammad (S) sitting near me and saying, **'Come to us, because what you will experience is better than what you are now in.'** 16

Astounded by the news of the Imam's injury, Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah, along with a group of the Imam's devoted companions, hurried to his house and sat behind the door. As they heard wails

and weeping voices, they also wept heavily. Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) came out and conveyed to them Imam Ali’s order to go back home.

They all left except Al-Asbagh who kept sitting behind the door of the Imam’s house. Upon hearing the Imam’s family members weeping, Al-Asbagh wept so loudly that they could hear him. Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) came out of the house and said to Al-Asbagh, ‘I have told you to leave. Have I not?’

Shedding heavy tears, Al-Asbagh said to the Imam, ‘O son of Allah’s Messenger, I cannot leave nor can my feet carry me away before I see the Leader of the Believers.’

Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) went in and told his father about Al-Asbagh. So, Imam Ali (‘a) permitted Al-Asbagh to visit him. Describing the Imam’s state, Al-Asbagh said, ‘Imam Ali’s bleeding head was wrapped with a yellow turban while his face was pale. I did not distinguish the color of the Imam’s face from the color of his turban. I thus threw myself on his body, kissed him frequently, and wept.’

The Imam (‘a), trying to calm down Al-Asbagh, said to him,

Do not weep. By Allah, it is Paradise.

Al-Asbagh answered with teary eyes and sad tone, ‘By Allah, I am sure that your destination will be to Paradise, but I weep for departing you.’[17]

‘Amr ibn Al-Hamq Al-Khuza’i, one of the most sincere and loyal men of Imam Ali (‘a), visited him and said, ‘O Leader of the Believers, you will recover your health. It is only a scratch.’

Despaired of life, Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

I will very soon depart you.

The Imam (‘a) then fainted and Lady Ummu-Kulthum wept so loudly that the Imam (‘a) regained consciousness. He said to her,

O Ummu-Kulthum, do not hurt me. If only you can see what I can see! The angels of the seven skies, following each other, and the prophets are saying to me, **‘Come on! What you will see is better than what you are experiencing.’** 18

Sa’sa’ah ibn Sawhan also visited Imam Ali (‘a) and found him in the last sparks of his life-a view that astounded him and made him hope to die before the Imam (‘a) would die.

Hujr ibn ‘Adi also presented himself before Imam Ali (‘a) who said to him,

O Hujr, how will you behave and what will you say when you will be asked to repudiate me?

Hujr answered, ‘By Allah, if I will be cut into pieces by swords and thrown in blazing fire, I will prefer that to repudiating you.’

Thanking him for this loyalty, the Imam (‘a) said, *O Hujr, may Allah grant you success in all of your affairs! May Allah reward you abundantly on behalf of the Household of your Prophet!*19

Imam Ali (‘a) then permitted all people to visit him. Thus, the masses crowded on the door of the Imam’s house shedding tears and expressing grief. Although he was suffering harsh pains, the Imam (‘a) said to them, *Ask me before you lose me! However, you may ask as easily as possible because your leader is suffering.*20

The Imam (‘a) then asked for a drink of milk, because milk can resist the effects of poison that entered his body from the sword of Ibn Muljim. When the Imam (‘a) drank the milk to the last drop of it, he remembered that the prisoner Ibn Muljim had not drunk milk. Therefore, the Imam (‘a) said,

The command of Allah is a decree that is made absolute. Be it known to you that I have drunk the entire milk and have not kept anything to your

prisoner. Verily, this is the last sustenance of me in this worldly life. I now adjure you by Allah to serve your prisoner with the same quantity of milk that I have just drunk. 21

When he was sure that he would soon depart from this world, Imam Ali (‘a) appointed Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) as the next Imam and asked Imam Al-Husayn (‘a), Muhammad, his other sons, the prominent personalities of his devotees, and his family members to witness to this appointing. Imam Ali (‘a) then handed the books and the weapon to Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) and said to him,

O son, the Messenger of Allah (S) ordered me to appoint you as my successor and to hand over my books and my weapon to you just as the Messenger of Allah (S) had appointed me as his successor and handed over his books and weapon to me. He also instructed me to order you that, when death comes upon you, you should hand over these things to your brother Al-Husayn. 22

At the twenty-first night of Ramadan, which is said to be the Grand (Qadr) Night, Imam Ali’s agonies intensified, since poison spread in his entire body. Describing the Imam’s state, his son Muhammad says, ‘We noticed that his two feet became red; therefore, we felt great sorry and despaired of his survival. Then, we offered to provide him some food or drink, but he refused. His two lips did not stop moving with words of remembering Almighty Allah. His forehead started sweating. I thus asked him, ‘O father, why is your forehead sweating?’

He (‘a) answered,

O son, I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, **‘When death comes upon a faithful believer, his forehead sweats and his moans calm down.’’**

When the Imam (‘a) realized that he would very soon departed from this world, he gathered all of his sons and daughters to bid the last farewell to them. When they all presented themselves before him, he said to them with a low voice,

I beseech Allah to be my representative among you. I entrust you with Allah.

They all started weeping heavily and loudly. The Imam (‘a) then turned his face toward his son Al-Hasan, who had asked why he had said these words, and said to him,

O son, I have seen in dream your grandfather the Messenger of Allah (S) one night before this calamity, and I complained to him about the humiliation and harm I was receiving from this nation. He therefore said to me, **‘You may invoke Allah’s curse on them.’** *I thus said, ‘O Allah, please make them face one more evil than I am and make me face people better than they are.’*

The Messenger of Allah (S) said to me, **‘Your prayer has been granted. After three nights, Allah will bring you to us.’** *Tonight, the three nights terminate. O Abu-Muhammad (Al-Hasan), I want you to take good care of Abu-’Abdullah (Al-Husayn), for you both are part of me and I am part of you.*

Imam Ali (‘a) then turned his face towards his other sons, ordered them not to violate the instructions of Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, and said to them,

May Allah console you excellently! This night, I will depart from you and catch my dear brother Muhammad (S) as he promised me.

He then fainted for a while. When he regained consciousness, he said to his sons,

I have just seen the Messenger of Allah (S), my uncle Hamzah, my brother Ja’far, and the companions of the Messenger of Allah (S) and all of them say to me, ‘Hurry up! Come to us! We are surely eager to meet you.’

Leniently, Imam Ali (‘a) then said,

I entrust you all with Allah. My representative among you is Allah, and He is the best of all representatives.

The Imam (‘a) then greeted the angels that had surrounded him to transmit his holy soul to the Highest Paradise. He then went on reciting verses of the Holy Quran. The last two holy Quranic verses he (‘a) recited were the following:

For the like of this, then let the workers work. (37:61)

Lo! Allah is with those who keep their duty unto Him and those who are doers of good. (16:128) 23

The Imam’s soul then left his body towards the Paradisiacal Abode surrounded by the angels, the prophets, and the prophets’ successors.

Imam Al-Hasan and his brothers performed the ritual bathing of the body of their father. At the last hours of night, they, accompanied by a group of the most virtuous believers, carried the body and buried it where the grave is now there. Thus, the burial place of Imam Ali (‘a) changed into the most handsome religious seminary in Islam.

Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) and his brothers then returned home, sinking in sorrow and grief.

Retaliation

The next morning, Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) ordered Abd Al-Rahman ibn Muljim to be summoned. When he was brought before the Imam (‘a), Ibn Muljim asked, ‘What did your father order you to do?’ The Imam (‘a) answered, ‘He ordered me to kill none but his killer, to satisfy your stomach, and to lodge you in a good place. If he would survive, he would reTalibate upon you or pardon you, but if he would die, I would make you follow him.’

Amazed by these words, Ibn Muljim the accursed said, ‘Verily, your father always said the truth and always judged fairly whether he was pleased or angered.’

Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) then struck Ibn Muljim with his sword but he received the sword with his hand that was consequently severed. The Imam (‘a) then finished his off with another strike.24

Eulogy Of Imam Ali

Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) came to Al-Kufah Mosque, ascended the min-bar, and said,

At this night, the soul of a man has been grasped. None of the past people could ever match him in one of his deeds and none of the coming generations will do the like of his acts. When he struggled under the commandership of the Messenger of Allah (S), he used to protect the Messenger of Allah (S) with himself.

When the Messenger of Allah (S) sent him as the bearer of his standard, Archangel Gabriel and Archangel Michael would sur-round him from the right and left sides. He would not return be-fore Almighty Allah would grant Muslims victory at his hands.

He passed away at the same night at which Jesus the son of Mary was risen to the heavens and the same night at which the soul of Joshua the son of Nun, the successor of Prophet Moses, was grasped. He has not left behind him any golden or silver coin ex-cept seven hundred silver coins that remained from his salary by which he had the intention to purchase a servant for his wife. He then ordered me to take these coins back to the public treasury.25

Sa’sa’ah ibn Sawhan stopped at the edge of Imam Ali’s grave and said these words:

‘May Allah accept my father and mother as ransoms for you, O Leader of the Believers! Congratulations, Abu’l-Hasan! Your birth was uniquely excellent, your steadfastness typically firm, your striving outstandingly great, and your opinion always the tri-umphant. So, your commerce has prospered.

When you came to your Lord, you were surrounded by His angels and you resided next to the Divinely Chosen Prophet. Allah has conferred upon you the honor of being the neighbor of Him, you have caught the rank of your brother the Chosen Prophet, and you have drunk from his fullest cup. I thus beseech Allah to grant us the favor of patterning after you, acting upon your conducts, befriending your devotees, and antagonizing your enemies; and I beseech Him to include us with the group of your disciples.

You have won what nobody else has ever won, you have been able to do what nobody else has ever been able to do, you have strived for the sake of your Lord in the presence of your brother the Chosen Prophet as exactly as strife should be, and you have assumed the religion of Allah as it should be so much so that you put into effect all the Prophetic practices, eradicated all spurious arguments, caused Islam to stand up erectly, and caused true faith to be well-organized. May Allah's best benedictions and peace be upon you on behalf of me! Through you only, Muslims found strength, the signs of the true path became clear, and the Prophetic practices were put into practice. None other than you has ever had all of your virtues and peculiarities gathered to him. You preceded all others to responding to the Prophet, giving him preference and priority to yourself.

You thus hurried to support him, defended him with your life, and threw your sword Dhu'l-Faqar in all situations of fear and terror. Through you, Allah annihilated all stubborn potentates, humiliated all those of invulnerable power, demolished all the fortresses of polytheism, atheism, aggression, and faTalibty, and killed the hostile people of deviation.

Congratulations for you! You were the closest to the Messenger of Allah (S), the first to declare Islam, the most knowledgeable, and the most learnt. Congratulations for you, O Abu'l-Hasan! Allah has indeed honored your standing. You were the closest to the Messenger of Allah (S) in family relationship, the first to embrace Islam, the fullest of certitude, the most brave-hearted, the readiest

to sacrifice your life in jihad, and the most rewardable for your acts of goodness.

May Allah never deprive us of rewards for following you and may He never show us humility after your departure! By Allah, your entire lifetime was the key to every item of decency and the lock of every act of wickedness. Nevertheless, the day of your passing away is the key to every act of wickedness and the lock of every item of decency. If people had only accepted from you, they would surely have been nourished from above them and from beneath them. Unfortunately, they, instead, preferred this world to the other world.'26

As for Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, he, weak and feeble, stopped at the burial place of Imam Ali ('a) and said, 'Alas for you, O Abu'l-Hasan! When he (i.e. Imam Ali) ruled, he neither changed, nor deformed, nor showed any shortcoming, nor collected for himself (worldly gains), nor deprived (others of their dues), nor preferred some people to others.

In his sight, the worldly pleasures were cheaper than the strip of his shoes. In battlefields, he fought like a lion. In debates of knowledge, he was as profound as oceans. He was the wisest of all wise men. Far it be! He has left forever towards the highest ranks.'27

A man from the Banu-Tamim tribe stopped at the burial place of Imam Ali ('a) and delivered the following speech:

'May Allah have mercy upon you, O Leader of the Believers! Just as your lifetime was the key to every item of decency, the lock of every item of wickedness, and just as you were luminous signpost through which true guidance was distinguished from deviation and good was distinguished from evil, so also is your passing away the key to every item of wickedness and the lock of every item of decency.

Verily, losing you is regret and remorse. If people had only accepted from you, they would have been nourished from above them and from beneath them. However, they preferred this world to the other world, causing themselves to be too perplexed to find the true path. Thus, wretchedness overcame them and incurable maladies overwhelmed them.
They are in increasing looseness just like a rope that is about to be unknotted. Extremely miserable is their future since they have preferred foolishness to sagacity and sold the very much with the very little. May Allah honor your abode and double up your rewards! Peace and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you.'28

Al-Qa'qa' ibn Ma'bad ibn Zurarah Al-Tamimi also stopped at the edge of Imam Ali's grave and said with grief and sorrow, 'May Allah's pleasure be with you, O Leader of the Believers! By Allah, your lifetime was the key to every item of prosperity and the lock of every item of wickedness. If people had only accepted from you, they would have been nourished from above them and from beneath them. However, they have despised the grace and preferred this world to the other world.'29

When Abu'l-Aswad Al-Du'ali was informed about the martyrdom of Imam Ali ('a) and the Imamate of Imam Al-Hasan ('a), he delivered an eloquent speech in which he elegized Imam Ali ('a) and praised Imam Al-Hasan ('a).

Many elegiac verses was composed in praise of Imam Ali ('a) by such personalities like Abu'l-Aswad Al-Du'ali, Ummu'l-'Uryan, Abu-Bakr ibn Hammad, Ummu'l-Haytham, Bakr ibn Hassan, and many others.30

Section 2: Tradition of Imam 'Ali

Imam 'Ali´ in the Holy Qur'an

In many verses, the Holy Quran praised Imam Ali ('a) for his extraordinary situations and demonstrated him as the most eminent personality after the Holy Prophet. Many sources of Quranic exe-

gesis (Tafsir) have counted three hundred Quranic verses to have been revealed in praise of Imam Ali (‘a) for his faith and virtue.31

In fact, this number has never been mentioned for any of the companions of the Holy Prophet (S) and the personalities of Islam. Let us now refer to some verses that have been revealed to show Imam Ali’s preference, great standing, and eminent personality:

1. The Holy Quran says,

You are only a warner and there is a guide for every people. (13:7)

Al-Tabari reports Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas to have said,

When this holy verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet (S) put his hand on Ali’s chest and said, *‘I am the warner and Ali is the guide.’ Pointing to Ali’s shoulder, the Holy Prophet (S) further said, ‘You are the true guide. Through you only will those who are guided to the right path be led to it.’* 32

2. The Holy Quran says,

‘And that the retaining ear might retain it. (69:12)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

The Messenger of Allah (S) said to me, ‘I have asked my Lord to make this ear to be yours, Ali.’ Since that day, I have never forgotten anything I heard from the Messenger of Allah. 33

3. The Holy Quran says,

As for those who spend their property by night and by day, secretly and openly, they shall have their reward from their Lord and they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. (2:274)

It is reported that Imam Ali (‘a) had four dirhams. He spent one dirham at night, another on day, a third secretly, and the fourth

openly. When the Holy Prophet (S) asked him for a reason, Imam Ali ('a) answered, *'I want to actualize my Lord's promise to me.'* This holy verse was revealed about this situation.34

4. The Holy Quran says,

As for those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of men. (98:7)

Ibn 'Asakir reports Jabir ibn Abdullah to have said: We were sitting with the Holy Prophet (S) when Ali came. Upon seeing him, the Holy Prophet (S) said, *I swear by Him Who grasps my soul, this one and his partisans (Shi'ah) shall be the winners on the Resurrection Day.*

The holy verse was then revealed for this cause. Hence, whenever Ali would come, the Holy Prophet's companions would say, 'There comes the best of men.' 35

5. The Holy Quran says,

Ask the followers of the Reminder if you do not know. (16:43)

Through his chain of authority, Al-Tabari has reported Jabir Al-Ju'fi as saying that when this holy verse was revealed, (Imam) Ali said:

*We are the followers of the Reminder.*36

6. The Holy Quran says,

O you who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah and be with the true ones. (9:119)

Al-Suyuti says that Ibn Mardawayh has reported Abdullah ibn 'Abbas as saying that the 'true ones' intended in this holy verse stands for Ali ibn Abi- Talib.

A similar narration is reported from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (‘a). 37

7. The Holy Quran says,

And he who brings the truth and he who accepts it as the truth--these are the true* pious. *(39:33)

Ibn Mardawayh has reported Abu-Hurayrah as saying that the one who brings the truth is the Holy Prophet (S) and the one who accepts it as true is Ali ibn Abi Talib. 38

8. The Holy Quran says,

O Messenger, deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord. And if you do it* not, *then you have not delivered His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Surely, Allah will not guide the unbelieving people. (5:67)

This holy verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet (S) at Khumm Spring (known as ghadir khumm) during his journey back from his last ritual pilgrimage to Makkah (known as the Farewell Pilgrimage). This holy verse carries a divine command of appointing Imam Ali (‘a) as the next leader of the Muslim nation. Carrying out this command, the Holy Prophet (S) announced Imam Ali as his vicegerent and the next leader of the nation. This prophetic divinely ordained appointment came in the following form:

Behold! As for any one who has regarded me as his master, Ali is now his master. O Allah, (please) accede to whomever accedes to Ali, be the enemy of whomever incurs the animosity of Ali, give victory to whomever supports Ali, and disappoint whomever disappoints Ali.

Immediately after this prophetic statement, ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab congratulated Imam Ali (‘a) for this position, saying, ‘Congratulations, O son of Abu Talib! You are now the master of me as well as every believing man and woman.’39

9. The Holy Quran says,

This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and* chosen *for you Islam as a religion. (5:3)

This holy verse was revealed on the eighteenth of Dhu'l-Hijjah immediately after the Holy Prophet (S) had declared publicly Imam Ali ('a) as the next leader.40

After the revelation of this verse, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

*Majestic be the Lord for the perfection of the religion, the completion of the favor, the satisfaction of Him with my conveyance of the Mission, and for the (divinely commissioned) leadership of Ali ibn Abi Talib.*41

10. The Holy Quran says,

Only Allah is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep* up *prayers and give alms while they bow. (5:55)

Abu-Dharr, the prominent companion of the Holy Prophet (S), has reported the following:

One day, I followed the Messenger of Allah (S) in a congregational Midday Prayer. When we finished, a beggar asked for something, but nobody gave him anything. He therefore raised his hands toward the sky and said, 'O Allah, bear witness to me that I have begged in the mosque of the Messenger, but nobody gave me anything.'

Meanwhile, Ali, who was in a state of genuflection in a prayer, pointed to a ring he was wearing in the little finger of his right hand. The beggar advanced toward Ali and took the ring while the Holy Prophet (S) was watching the scene. Upon this situation, the Holy Prophet (S) supplicated the Lord, saying,

O Allah, my brother (Prophet) Moses asked you, saying, 'O my Lord! Expand my breast for me, make my affair easy to me, loose the knot from my tongue that they may understand my word, and give to me an aide from my family: Aaron, my brother. Strengthen my back by him and as-

sociate him (with me) in my affair.' So, You responded to him, saying in a clear-cut verse of the Quran:

'We will strengthen your arm with your brother and We will give you both an authority.' O *Allah, as for me, Muhammad, Your prophet and the choicest one, I beseech You to expand my breast for me, make my affair easy to me, and give me an aide from my family: Ali. Strengthen my back by him.*

As soon as the Holy Prophet (S) finished his prayer, Archangel Gabriel descended to him and said, 'O Muhammad, read this:

Only Allah is your Guardian' etc. 42

11. The Holy Quran says,

And the foremost are the foremost. These are they who are drawn nigh (to Allah). (56:10-11)

The majority of scholars have reported Ibn 'Abbas as saying that the foremost of this nation is Ali ibn Abi Talib.43

12. The Holy Quran says,

Among men is he who sells himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Affectionate to the servants. (2:207)

This holy Quranic verse was revealed to express the event of Imam Ali's replacing the Holy Prophet (S) in his bed so as to give him (S) the opportunity to flee to Yathrib (Al-Madinah) after the polytheists of Makkah had plotted to assassinate him when he would be sleeping in his bed. Hence, the Holy Prophet (S) left the city and Imam Ali ('a) accepted to spend that night in the Prophet's bed so that the assassinators would believe that the Holy Prophet (S) was still there.44

13. The Holy Quran says,

He it is Who strengthened you with His help and with the believers. (8:62)

This holy verse was revealed to express one of Imam Ali's manners and to name him as 'the believers.' Al-Suyuti has reported on the authority of Ibn 'Asakir that Abu-Hurayrah said, 'On the Divine Throne, the following words are inscribed: 'There is no god but Me, One and Only, without having any partner with Me. Muhammad is My servant and Messenger. I aid him with Ali.''

14. The Holy Quran says,

Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives. And whoever earns good, We give him more of good therein. Surely, Allah is Forgiving, Grateful. (42:23)

The majority of exegetes of the Holy Quran and narrators of the Prophetic traditions have decided that the 'near relatives' the love for whom has been decided by Almighty Allah as duty that is obligatory upon His servants are namely Imam Ali, Lady Fatimah , Imam Al-Hasan, and Imam Al-Husayn, peace be upon them all. Likewise, they have decided that earning good, which is mentioned in this holy verse, stands for love for and loyalty to them.

In this respect, Ibn 'Abbas has reported that when the holy verse involved was revealed, the Holy Prophet (S) was asked, 'Who are your near relatives the love for whom has been made obligatory upon us?' The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

They are Ali, Fatimah , and their two sons. 45

Advancing an argument against his rivals, Imam Ali ('a), one an occasion, has said,

In Surah Ha-Mim, there is a verse that was revealed to express our manner. This verse reads:

' Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives. And whoever earns good, We give him more of good

therein. Surely, Allah is Forgiving, Grateful. (42:23)'

15. The Holy Quran says,

But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our near people and your near people, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars.(3:61)

Unanimously, exegetes of the Holy Quran and narrators of the Prophetic traditions have decided that this holy verse was revealed concerning the Holy Prophet's Household ('a). The 'sons' mentioned in the verse expresses Imam Al-Hasan and Imam Al-Husayn ('a), the 'women' stands for Lady Fatimah ('a), and 'ourselves' expresses Imam Ali ('a).46

Let us now quote the incident from Al-Muwaffaq Al-Khawrizmi's famous book entitled Al-Manaqib, page 159:

Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, Al-Hasan, Al-Shi'bi, and Al-Siddi-all have reported this event, which is known as Mubahalah, as follows:

As the delegation of the Christians of Najran attended before the Holy Prophet (S), the archbishop who was leading them advanced and asked, 'O Abu'l-Qasim (the Prophet's nickname), who was the father of (Prophet) Moses?'

'It was 'Imran,' answered the Prophet *(S).*

The archbishop then asked, 'Who was the father of (Prophet) Joseph?'

The Prophet (S) answered, '*It was (Prophet) Jacob?'*

The archbishop then asked, 'Who was your father?'

The Prophet (S) answered, *'I am the son of Abdullah ibn Abd-Al-Muttalib.'*

The archbishop then asked, 'What about (Prophet) Jesus? Who was his father?'

The Prophet (S) kept silent, waiting for the Divine Revelation. Immediately, Archangel Gabriel descended with God's saying:

Surely, the likeness of Jesus is with Allah as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, Be, and he was. (This is) the truth from your Lord, so be not of the disputers.(3:59-60)

The archbishop commented, 'What was revealed to us does not involve such information.'

Hence, Archangel Gabriel revealed to the Prophet (S) God's saying:

If any one disputes in this matter with thee, now after full knowledge has come to you, say: "Come! Let us gather together our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves. Then, let us earnestly pray and invoke the curse of Allah on those who lie!"(3.61)

The archbishop commented, 'This is truly fair. When shall we meet to invoke God's curse on the lying party?'

The Prophet (S) answered, *'Let it be tomorrow, God willing.'*

The Christian delegation then left. They advised each other, 'If he will accompany some of his companions for the meeting tomorrow, then you shall compete with him, for, in such case, his claim is false. But if he will accompany some members of his family, then do not compete with him, for, in such case, he is truly a prophet, and if he will invoke God's curse upon us, we will certainly be perishing.'

Some of them however declared, 'We do know that he is the very prophet we are expecting, and if he invokes God's curse on us, we will surely be perishing and will never go back to our families or fortunes.'

The other Jews and Christians asked, 'What should we do, then?'

Abu'l-Harth, the bishop, suggested, 'Since he is a generous man, we may visit him and ask him to accept our withdrawal from this competition of invocating God's curse on the lying party.'

The next morning, the Prophet (S) invited all the people of Al-Madinah and the neighboring villages to attend that meeting, and everybody responded.

The Prophet (S) went out, Ali was behind him, Al-Hasan to his right (and he was catching his arm), Al-Husayn to his left, and Fatimah behind them. He then said,

'Let us begin. These (Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn) are our sons, Ali and I ourselves, and this (Fatimah) our women.'

As they saw this situation, the other party attempted to hide themselves behind any column they could find or behind each other, because they anticipated that the Prophet (S) would start invoking God's curse on them.

They therefore moved toward him, knelt down before him, and besought, 'Please, accept our withdrawal from this matter.'

The Prophet (S) accepted their withdrawal after they had had to pay him one thousand garments as recompense.[47]

16. The Holy Quran says,

There surely came over man a period of time when he was a thing not worth mentioning' (1:76).

All exegetes of the Holy Quran and narrators of the Prophetic traditions have unanimously declared that this holy Quranic chapter (Surah) was revealed to express one of the manners of the Holy Prophet's Household ('a). The following is an account of the event concerning which the holy Quranic chapter was revealed:

The Holy Prophet (S), with some of his companions, visited Al-Hasan and Al- Husayn who were sick. They suggested that Imam Ali (‘a) should vow a three-day fasting if they would recover their health. The Imam (‘a), as well as their mother Lady Fatimah (‘a) and Fissah, their bondwoman, participated in that vow. When Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn (‘a) were healed, the group fasted.

The Imam (‘a) had no food at that time; therefore, he had to borrow three measures of barley from Shimon, a Jew grocer. On the first day, Lady Fatimah (‘a) milled and baked one of these measures. At the very time of breaking the fast, a poor man knocked their door and said, ‘Peace be upon you, O family of Muhammad! I am a poor Muslim. Serve me with food and God may serve you from the food of Paradise.’

The Imam (‘a) gave him his share. The others did the same thing and they all passed that night without eating anything. On the second day of their fasting, an orphan complaining hunger knocked their door in the time of breaking the fast. They offered their shares and passed the second night without having anything except water. On the third day and at the very time of breaking the fast, a prisoner complaining hunger knocked their door asking for some food. They all offered him their shares before having had anything of it.

On the fourth day, Imam Ali (‘a) took Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn (‘a) to the Holy Prophet (S) while they were trembling because of hunger. *‘I am very touched for what I see,’* said the Holy Prophet (S), who walked with them to their house. There, he saw Lady Fatimah (‘a) standing in her prayer-place while her belly was stuck to her back and her eyes were deep-set. He was affected by this scene. In the meantime, Archangel Gabriel descended and said, ‘O Muhammad, enjoy it. Allah may please you with regard to your household!’

He then revealed to him Surah Al-Insan.[48]

17. The Holy Quran says,

Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House, and* to *purify you a thorough purifying. (33:33)

Exegetes of the Holy Quran and narrators of the Prophetic traditions have unanimously stated that this holy verse was revealed concerning the five individuals of the cloak; namely, the Holy Prophet, Imam Ali, Lady Fatimah , Imam Al-Hasan, and Imam Al-Husayn, peace be upon them all.

It is authentically reported that Ummu-Salamah, the veracious wife of the Holy Prophet, stated that this holy verse was revealed at her house where there were Lady Fatimah , Imam Al-Hasan, Imam Al-Husayn, and Imam Ali in addition to the Holy Prophet (S) who covered them all under his cloak and said,

'O Allah, these are my household. So, please remove uncleanness from them and purify them with thorough purification.'

Ummu-Salamah, who tried to be with them under that cloak, asked, 'O Allah's Messenger, can I be with you?' The Holy Prophet (S) pulled the cloak and said, 'You are on the right.'[49]

18. The Holy Quran says,

On the most elevated places, there shall be men who know all by their marks. (7:46)

Ibn 'Abbas has reported that on these most elevated places (i.e. a'raf), Al- 'Abbas, Hamzah, Ali ibn Abi Talib, and Ja'far the two-winged are standing. They will recognize their devotees by the whiteness of their faces and their enemies by the blackness of their faces.[50]

19. The Holy Quran says,

Of the believers are men who are true to the covenant, which they made with Allah; so,* of *them is he who accomplished his vow, of them is he who yet waits, and they have not changed in the leas. (33:23)

When he was asked about the explanation of this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

O Allah, please forgive me. This verse was revealed concerning my uncle Hamzah, my cousin ‘Ubaydah ibn Al-Harith, and me. As for ‘Ubaydah, he was martyred in the Battle of Badr. As for Hamzah, he was martyred in the Battle of Uhud. As for me, I am waiting for the most wretched of all people to dye my beard with the blood of my head.[51]

20. The Holy Quran says,

What! Do you make one who undertakes the giving of drink to the pilgrims and the guarding of the Sacred Mosque like him who believes in Allah and the latter day and strives hard in Allah's way? They are not equal with Allah. And Allah does not guide the unjust people. (9:19)

Taking pride in his deed, Talhah ibn Shaybah said, ‘I am the custodian of the Sacred House. I have it keys in my hand and I am in charge of its curtains.’ Al-’Abbas said, ‘I am in charge of serving the pilgrims with water.’ As for Imam Ali (‘a), he said, ‘I do not understand what you are saying. I have performed prayers directing my face toward this House six months before everyone else did. I am the fighter for the sake of this religion.’

So, this holy verse was revealed to prefer Imam Ali (‘a) to the others.[52]

21. The Holy Quran says,

Is he then who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal. (32:18)

One day, Al-Walid ibn ‘Uqbah ibn Abi-Ma’it boasted over Imam Ali, saying, ‘I am more eloquent than you are, my sword is sharper than yours, and I am firmer in fighting than you are.’

Answering him, Imam Ali (‘a) said, *‘Shut up! You are no more than a transgressor.’*

Hence, this holy verse was revealed to compare between the two.53

22. The Holy Quran says,

What! Is he whose heart Allah has opened for Islam so that he is in a light from his Lord like the hard-hearted? Nay, woe to those whose hearts are hard against the remembrance of Allah. Those are in clear error. (39:22)

This holy verse was revealed to compare between Imam Ali and Hamzah on one side and Abu-Lahab and his sons on the other. Imam Ali and Hamzah are those whose hearts God has opened for Islam by true faith and piety, while Abu-Lahab and his sons are the hardhearted ones who are in clear error.54

23. The Holy Quran says,

Nay! Do those who have wrought evil deeds think that We will make them like those who believe and do good-- that their life and their death shall be equal? Evil it is that they judge. (45:21)

This holy verse was revealed about Imam Ali, kamzah, and 'Ubaydah on one side and three polytheists on the other; namely, 'Utbah, Shaybah, and Al- Walid ibn 'Utbah who said to the believers, 'You are following nothing! If what you are claiming is true, then our end result in the Hereafter will be better than yours, since we live better lives than yours in this world.'

Denying this false claim, the Almighty Allah demonstrates that a faithful believer who obeys Allah and His Messenger can by no means be like the unbeliever who disobeys Him.55

24. The Holy Quran says,

Surely, they who are guilty used to laugh at those who believe. (83:29)

Once, Imam Ali (‘a) and a group of Muslim individuals passed by a group of hypocrites who laughed at them and winked at each other as a sign of mockery and sarcasm. When they returned to their likes, they said, ‘Today, we saw the bald (i.e. Imam Ali) and we laughed at him.’

This holy verse was immediately revealed to the Holy Prophet (S) before Imam. Ali (‘a) was in his presence.56

25. The Holy Quran says,

O you who believe, whoever from among you turns back from his religion, then Allah will bring a people; He shall love them and they shall love Him, (they are) lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard in Allah's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer. This is Allah's Favor; He gives it to whom He pleases, and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing. (5:54)

This holy Quranic verse was revealed to express the manners of Imam Ali (‘a) and his companions who fought against the breakers of their pledge of allegiance (in the Battle of the Camel), the wrongdoers (in the Battle of Siffin), and the apostates (in the Battle of Al-Nahrawan).57

26. The Holy Quran says,

And those who disbelieve say, ‘You are not a messenger.’ Say, ‘Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and also he who has knowledge of the Book.’ (13:43)

Abu-Sa’id Al-Khidri is reported to have asked the Holy Prophet (S) about the one ‘who has knowledge of the Book’ mentioned in this holy verse.

The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

He is my brother Ali ibn Abi Talib. 58

27. The Holy Quran says,

Lo! Those who believe and do good works, the Beneficent Lord will appoint for them love. (19:96)

Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas is reported to have explained the word wudd (love) into love for Imam Ali (‘a) that can be felt in the hearts of the true faithful believers.59

Al-Bara' ibn ‘Azib reported that the Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam Ali (‘a), You may say this supplicatory prayer: O Allah, please make for me a covenant with You, make for me love with You, and create affection for me in the hearts of the believers.

As a consequence, Almighty Allah revealed this verse (i.e. the one involved) to express the love for Imam Ali (‘a) in the hearts of the believers.60

28. The Holy Quran says,

And He it is Who has created man from the water, then He has made for him blood relationship and marriage relationship, and your Lord is powerful. (25:54)

Ibn Sirin, a master scholar, says, ‘This holy verse was revealed about the Holy Prophet (S) and Ali ibn Abi Talibthe husband of Fatimah , because Ali was the Prophet’s cousin (blood relation) and son-in-law (marriage relation).’61

29. The Holy Quran says,

O you who believe, when you hold conference with the messenger, offer an alms before your conference. That is better and purer for you. But if you cannot find (the wherewithal), then lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (58:12)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

There is a verse in the Book of Allah that no one had acted upon before me and no one will act upon after me. It is the verse of Al-najwa (holding conference). I had one dinar and I sold it for ten dirhams. Whenever I held conference with the Holy Prophet (S), I offered one dirham before my consultation. Then, this verse was repealed by this one: 'Do you fear that you will not be able to give in charity before your consultation? So, when you do not do it and Allah has turned to you mercifully, then keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and obey Allah and His Messenger; and Allah is Aware of what you do.' 62

30. The Holy Quran says,

Whereof do they question one another? It is of the great news. (78:1-2)

According to some traditions, the 'great news' mentioned in this holy verse is Imam Ali ('a).63

Imam ' Ali´ explains Qur'anic verses

The Holy Quran is the most abundant treasure gifted by Almighty Allah to humanity and the most precious hoard of Islam. Almighty Allah has sent it down to His servant and Messenger to act as an endless and indeformable miracle that proves his Prophethood and demonstrates the authenticity of his mission, to amend all crookedness, to improve the deviations in this worldly life, to light up the path, to clarify the course, and to lead humanity to security and safety.

The Holy Quran is the eternal message of Almighty Allah and the shielding armor against deviation and against His chastisement. He revealed it to the best of all of His creatures, the most perfect in thought, the most sincere in faith, the most merciful, and the one whom Almighty Allah has described as follows:

Certainly, a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; grievous to him is your falling into distress, excessively solicitous

respecting you; to the believers (he is) compassionate, merciful. (9:128)

Declaring the Book of Almighty Allah, the Holy Messenger (S) proclaimed its verses, announced its statements, and read out its laws on people despite their various nationalities, languages, and regions.

Owing to its great scientific and notional faculties, the Holy Quran created a huge revolution in the society that was sinking in the life offenses; it has thus devastated all of the nasty traditions and customs, crafted a perfect course to run all their social, political, and economic fields of life, and founded the features of social justice that eradicated all forms of wrongdoing, transgression, and violation of the human inviolabilities.

The teachings, laws, and instructions of the Holy Quran have come to uplift all human beings, raise their entities, and make them the representatives of Almighty Allah on this globe. How abundant benefits the Holy Quran has brought to humanity, and how rich and profuse its graces and favors to people are!

It is replete with decisive and allegorical, general and particular, open and restricted verses; therefore, to interpret these verses and to acquaint oneself with the exact meaning that was revealed from the Lord of the Worlds cannot be attained except by special people whom the Holy Quran has described as the firmly rooted in knowledge.

These people are namely the members of the Holy Prophet's Household who are the lanterns of Islam, the guides of humanity, and the occupiers of the highest ranks in the religion. They lived with the Holy Quran and familiarized themselves with its precise points, secrets, principles, and teachings. It is therefore unavoidable to refer to their explanatory words about the Holy Quran. This is the very truth that must never be suspected or disbelieved.

Needless to say, Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib(‘a), the chief of the Holy Prophet’s Household, was the first to recognize the Holy Quran and apprehend its contents. The most brilliant exegete of the Holy Quran; namely, Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas, was only a student of Imam Ali (‘a); so, the knowledge and sciences of Abdullah are in reality a small part of Imam Ali’s knowledge and sciences.

Imam Ali (‘a) derived his knowledge with the Holy Quran from his brother and cousin; namely, the Holy Prophet (S), who conveyed the exegesis of each single holy Quranic verse to him infact that was declared by Imam Ali (‘a) himself when he said,

I have collected every single verse of the Quran that Allah has revealed to His Prophet, who has not left a single verse of it but that he read it before me and informed me about its interpretation. 64

On another occasion, Imam Ali (‘a) has said,

No a single verse of the Quran that was revealed but that I know where, about what, and for which issue it has been revealed. I also know whether it was revealed in a plain or on a mountain. 65

Thus, Imam Ali (‘a) was the first to comprehend the knowledge with the Holy Quran and to be acquainted with its contents and purports.

During the reigns of the three caliphs, Imam Ali (‘a) devoted himself to explaining the Holy Quran and demonstrating the meanings of its words. He thus hit upon the affairs of the universe, the faith of monotheism, and the wonders of the creatures as well as every matter that has been mentioned in the Holy Quran.

The Holy Imams (‘a) used to refer to and take pride in the explanations of Imam Ali (‘a) so gloriously that some anti-Shi’ah people claimed that these Imams (‘a) had in their hands a copy of the Quran different from the familiar one, making this false impression a means to criticize the Shi’ah and their divinely ordained leaders.

Of course, this false claim stems from the weak pondering of these persons, because the Shi'ah believe indisputably that there is no other Quran than the one they are reciting and following and that this Quran is the very one that was revealed from the Lord of the Worlds to the Seal of the Prophets (S).

The copy that was with Imam Ali ('a) contained nothing more than exegeses and explanations of the Holy Quran.

Most certainly, if Imam Ali ('a) had been allowed to hold the position of leadership after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S), the life of Muslims would have developed and the genuine principles and high moral standards would have been the prevalent. This is so because Imam Ali ('a) possessed such exceptional faculties and knowledge that none else could have their likes, because he was the door to the city of the Holy Prophet's knowledge and sciences that are neither limited nor exhaustible.

Declaring this fact, Imam Ali ('a) said,

Behold! By Allah, if the pillow (i.e. seat of power) had been folded for me, I would have judged between the people of the Torah according to their book until the Torah would speak out to declare, ''Ali is totally truthful. He has not told any lie. He has judged between you according to what Allah revealed in me.' I would have also judged between the people of the Gospel according to their book, until the Gospel would speak out to declare, ''Ali is totally truthful. He has not told any lie. He has judged between you according to what Allah revealed in me.

' I would have also judged between the people of the Quran according to their book, until the Quran would speak out to declare, ''Ali is totally truthful. He has not told any lie. He has judged between you according to what Allah revealed in me.' You are reciting the Quran day and night; is there any one amongst you who knows what is exactly revealed in it? Had it not been for a single verse in the Book of Allah, I would have informed you about what had already taken place and about what will take place up to the Resurrection Day. The verse involved is this:

'Allah effaces what He will and establishes (what He will), and with Him is the source of ordinance. (13:39)' 66

It is unfortunate that the Muslim community could not benefit from the scientific faculties and knowledge of this man; therefore, they were deprived of the amazing secrets of the Holy Quran.

Once again, it is unfortunate that we could not find any book that comprised the exegeses of Imam Ali ('a) of the entire Holy Quran; rather, some exegetes have only referred to some snapshots appertained to the Imam's explanatory words of some Quranic verses.

In the coming lines, I will bring up these explanatory words to demonstrate the profundity of Imam Ali's knowledge with the Holy Quran. Before that, I will state some points that reveal Imam Ali's view about the Holy Quran.

Describing the Holy Book of Almighty Allah, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Certainly, the outside of the Quran is wonderful and its inside is deep in meaning. Its wonders will never disappear, its amazements will never pass away, and its intricacies cannot be cleared except through itself. 67

The Quran Is Illumination

Talking about the Divine grace of revealing the Holy Quran, Imam Ali says,

Then, Allah sent to him (i.e. the Holy Prophet) the Book as a light whose flames cannot be extinguished, a lamp whose gleam does not die, a sea whose depth cannot be sounded, a way whose direction does not mislead, a ray whose light does not darken, a separator (of good from evil) whose arguments do not weaken, a clarifier whose foundations cannot be dismantled, a cure which leaves no apprehension for disease, an honor whose supporters are not defeated, and a truth whose helpers are not abandoned.

Therefore, it is the mine of belief and its centre, the source of knowledge and its oceans, the plantation of justice and its pools, the foundation-stone of Islam and its construction, the valleys of truth and its plains, an ocean which those who draw water cannot empty, springs which those who draw water cannot dry up, a watering place which those who come to take water cannot exhaust, a staging place in moving towards which travelers do not get lost, signs which no treader fails to see and a high-land which those who approach it cannot surpass it.

Allah has made it a quencher of the thirst of the learned, a bloom for the hearts of religious jurists, a highway for the ways of the righteous, a cure after which there is no ailment, an effulgence with which there is no darkness, a rope whose grip is strong, a stronghold whose top is invul-nerable, an honor for him who loves it, a peace for him who enters it, a guidance for him who follows it, an excuse for him who adopts it, an ar-gument for him who argues with it, a witness for him who quarrels with it, a success for him who argues with it, a carrier of burden for him who seeks the way, a shield for him who arms himself (against misguidance), a knowledge for him who listens carefully, worthy story for him who re-lates
it and a final verdict of him who passes judgments. 68

The Quran Speaks

In one of his brilliant descriptions of the Holy Quran, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The Book of Allah is among you. It speaks and its tongue does not falter. It is a house whose pillars do not fall down and a power whose support-ers are never routed. 69

The Holy Quran Tells About The Past And Predicts The Future

About the discourses of the Holy Quran, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The Quran contains news about the past, predictions about the future, and commandments for the present. 70

The Holy Quran; The Rope Of Allah

Instructing his companions to abide by the Holy Quran, Imam Ali ('a) says,

You should adhere to the Book of Allah, because it is the strong rope, a clear light, a benefiting cure, a quenching for thirst, protection for the adherent, and deliverance for the attached. It does not curve so as to need straightening and does not deflect so as to be corrected. Frequency of its repetition and its falling on ears does not make it old. Whoever speaks according to it, speaks truth and whoever acts by it is forward in action. 71

The Holy Quran; An Adviser

About the virtue and importance of the Holy Quran, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Know that this Quran is an adviser who never deceives, a leader who never misleads, and a narrator who never speaks a lie. No one will sit beside this Quran but that when he rises he will achieve one addition or one diminution or addition in his guidance or elimination in his spiritual blindness.

You must also know that no one will need anything after guidance from the Quran and no one will be free from want before guidance from the Quran. Therefore, seek cure from it for your ailments and seek its assistance in your distresses. It contains a cure for the biggest diseases; namely, unbelief, hypocrisy, revolt and misguidance. Pray to Allah through it and turn to Allah with its love. Do not ask the people through it. There is nothing like it through which the people should turn to Allah, the Sublime.

Know that it is an interceder and its intercession will be accepted. It is a speaker who is testified. For whoever the Quran intercedes on the Judgment Day, its intercession for him will be accepted. He about whom the Quran speaks ill on the Judgment Day shall testify to it.

On the Judgment Day, an announcer will announce 'Beware! Every sower of a crop is in distress except the sowers of the Quran.' Therefore, you should be among the sowers of the Quran and its followers. Make it your guide towards Allah. Seek its advice for yourselves, do not trust your views against it, and regard your desires in the matter of the Quran as deceitful. 72

The Holy Quran; The True Guidance

Imam Ali ('a) says about the true guidance of the Holy Quran,

Be it known to you that the Quran is the true guidance in daylight and the light in the murky night although it requires much effort and it may lead to indigence. 73

Imam Ali Encourages Learning The Holy Quran

Encouraging his followers to learn the Holy Quran, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Learn the Quran, for it is the fairest of discourses; and understand it thoroughly, for it is the best blossoming of hearts. Seek cure with its light, for it is the cure for hearts. Recite it beautifully, for it is the most beautiful narration. Certainly, a scholar who acts not according to his knowledge is like the off-headed ignorant who does not find relief from his ignorance, but on the learned the plea of Allah is greater and grief more incumbent, and he is more blameworthy before Allah. 74

One day, Imam Ali ('a) advised Ghalib ibn Sa'•a'ah Al-Mujashi'i to encourage his son, Al-Farazdaq, to learn the Holy Quran rather than poetry. He thus said to him,

Make him learn the Quran, for it is better for him than learning poetry. 75

Supplicatory Prayer At Completing Reciting The Holy Quran

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said this supplicatory prayer whenever he completed reciting the Holy Quran entirely:

O Allah, I beseech You for the humbleness of those who humble themselves before You, for the sincerity of those possessing certainty, for the companionship of the pious ones, for the worthiness of the truths of faith, for gaining a share of all pious deeds, for safety from all sins, for the merit of Your mercy, for the qualifications of winning Your forgiveness, for winning Paradise, and for salvation from Hellfire. 76

The Imam (‘a) is also reported to have said this supplicatory prayer at the accomplishment of reciting the Holy Quran entirely:

O Allah, please expand my breast with the Quran, actuate my body with the Quran, enlighten my sight with the Quran, liberate my tongue by the Quran, and help me to mould my life according to the Quran so long as you make me live, for verily there is neither power nor might save with You. 77

The Holy Quran; The Springtime Of Hearts

Imam Ali (‘a) is also reported to have described the Holy Quran as follows:

Allah the Glorified has not counseled anyone on the lines of this Quran, for it is the strong rope of Allah and His trustworthy means. It contains the blossoming of the heart and springs of knowledge. For the heart, there is no other gloss than the Quran. 78

Imam Ali’s Exegeses Of Quranic Verses

It is reported that Imam Ali (‘a) once said in the presence of a group of people,

Ask me whatever you want to know about the Book of Allah. By Allah, no verse of the Book of Allah that was revealed at night, in daylight, during a journey, or in a residence place but that Allah’s Messenger recited it before me and taught me its interpretation.

One of the filthy persons of that community said to the Imam (‘a) sarcastically,

'What about the verses that were revealed to him while you were absent?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

The Messenger of Allah used to retain for me whatever Quranic verses that would be revealed to him while I was absent. Then, when I came to him, he would recite these verses before me. He would then say to me, 'O Ali, in your absence, Allah has revealed to me such-and-such, and its interpretation is such-and-such.' So, he would convey to me the revelations and the interpretations. 79

Surah Al-Fatihah

About the first verse in Surah Al-Fatihah (No. 1); i.e. bismi (a)llahi Al- rahmani Al-rahim (basmalah), Imam Ali ('a) says,

The basmalah in the beginning of each Surah is part of it. The end of each Surah was recognized when the basmalah was revealed to declare the beginning of a new Surah. The basmalah was the exordium of whatever Book Almighty Allah has revealed from the heavens.

Confirming the basmalah to be part of Surah Al-Fatihah, Imam Ali ('a) says,

The basmalah is part of Surah Al-Fatihah. The Messenger of Allah (S) used to recite and regard it as a verse of Surah Al-Fatihah. He would say, 'Surah Al-Fatihah (i.e. the exordium of the Quran) is the seven oft-repeated verses (i.e. Al-sab ' Al-mathani). 80

Explaining the word Al-Rahman, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Al-Rahman (the All-beneficent) means the compassionate to His creatures through His conferrals with sustenance. He never stops sending them the material of His sustenance even if they stop worshipping Him. 81

About the significance of Surah Al-Fatihah, Imam Ali ('a) says,

I heard Allah's Messenger quoting Almighty Allah as saying: I have divided the Exordium of the Book (Surah Al-Fatihah) between Me and My servant. Half of it is Mine and the other half belongs to My servant. My servant can get whatever he asks for. When the servant says, 'bismiallahi alrahmani alrahimi (In the Name of Allah the All-beneficent, the All-merciful)' Allah the Exalted and Magnificent will say, 'My servant started with My Name. It is now incumbent upon Me to perfect his affair and bless his conditions.'

When he says, 'Al-hamdu lillahi rabbi Al- 'alamina (Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds)' Allah the Exalted and Magnificent says, 'My servant expressed praise to Me and recognized that the blessings that he possesses are from Me and that the calamities which are fended off from him have been fended off by My power. I take you (O angels) as witnesses that I will add the blessings of the Hereafter to his worldly blessings and will fend off the calamities of the Hereafter from him just as I fended off the worldly calamities from him.'

When he says, 'alrahmani alrahimi (the All-beneficent, the All-merciful)' Allah the Exalted and Magnificent will say, 'My servant testified that I am All-beneficent and All-merciful. I take you to witness that I will increase his share of My mercy and expand his share of My beneficence.'

When he says, 'Maliki yawmi aldini (Master of the Judgment Day),' Allah the Exalted and Magnificent will say, 'I take you as witness and I bear witness that as he (i.e. the servant) has testified that I am the Master of the Judgment Day, I will make his reckoning easy on the Reckoning Day, I will admit his good deeds, and I will forgive his bad deeds.'

When he says, 'iyyaka na 'budu (You alone do we worship),' Allah the Honorable and Exalted will say, 'My servant is right. He only worships Me. Bear witness that I will grant him such a reward for this worshipping that whoever opposes him in this worship will envy him.'

When he says, 'waiyyakanasta 'inu (and Your aid alone do we seek),' Allah the Honorable and Exalted will say, 'My servant is seeking My help and is taking refuge in Me. I take you to witness that I will assist him in

his affairs and will support him in times of difficulty, and rescue him on days of hardship.'

When he says, 'ihdina Alsirata almustaqima sirata alladhina an 'amta 'alayhimghayrialmaghsubi 'alayhimwalaalsallina (Show us the straight way: the way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray),' Allah the Honorable and Exalted will say, 'This is My servant. Whatever My servant wants is considered fulfilled and whatever he wills will be done. I will protect him against what he fears.' 82

Imam Ali ('a) is also reported to have said that Surah Al-Fatihah was revealed in the holy city of Makkah.

About the meaning of Alhamd (praise), Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Allah has made His servants recognize some of His blessings on the whole, since they cannot recognize all of His blessings in detail, because these blessings are too much to be enumerated or recognized. Thus, He teaches them to say: Praise be to Allah for the blessings, which the Lord of the Worlds has bestowed upon us.

All things, including the animate and inanimate, are the creations of Almighty Allah. He manages the animate things with His power, feeds them their sustenance, protects them behind His shield, and plans all of their affairs according to His plans. He maintains the inanimate things with His might. He keeps what is held together from tearing apart and keeps what is in separate parts from collapsing into one. He keeps the sky from falling do wn except with His permission, and prevents the earth from sinking in except with His permission, since He is Kind and Merciful to His servants. 83

Explaining the phrase rabbi Al'alamin (the Cherisher of the Worlds), Imam Ali ('a) continues to say,

Allah is the owner of the groups, their Creator, and the Provider of their daily bread through ways that they know and ways that they do not

know. The daily sustenance is divided up. It will reach the children of Adam (i.e. human beings) no matter which way they go in this world. One's piety will not cause an increase in it nor will a wicked person's corruption cause a decrease in his share of the daily bread. There is a veil in between one and his share of the daily bread, and he is running after his daily bread. If one tries to escape from his share of the daily bread, it will follow him just as death does. 84

About the exegesis of ihdina Al•irata almustaqima (Show us the straight way), Imam Ali ('a) says,

It means: Maintain for us success that is granted by You through which we obeyed You in our past days, so that we will keep on obeying You in the coming days of our lifetimes. 85

According to another report, Imam Ali ('a) explained the straight way to be the Book of Almighty Allah.86

About the exegesis of sirata alladhina an'amta 'alayhim ghayri al-maghsubi 'alayhim wa la alzallin (The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, those whose portion is not wrath, and who go not astray), Imam Ali ('a) says,

It means: Lead us to the way of those whom You have endued with the grace of granting them success to follow Your religion and obedience to You, not by means of wealth and health; otherwise, they may become atheists or sinful. About those people, Allah has said,

'Whoso obeys Allah and the Messenger, they are with those to whom Allah has shown favor; of the prophets, the saints, the martyrs, and the righteous. The best of company are they. (4:69). 87

Surah Al-Baqarah
Exegesis of Verse No. 7

This holy Quranic verse reads,

Allah has sealed their hearing and their hearts, and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be an awful doom. (2:7)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

According to His infinite knowledge, Almighty Allah has known that these people will not believe; He therefore set a seal upon their hearts and hearings so that His determination about them will be compatible to His infinite knowledge with them. Listen to this saying of Him, the All- exalted:

Had Allah known of any good in them, He would have made them hear. (8:23)' 88

Exegesis of Verse No. 29

This holy Quranic verse reads,

He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth. Then turned He to the heaven, and fashioned it as seven heavens. And He is knower of all things. (2:29)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Allah is the One Who has created for you whatever is in and on the earth so that you will learn lessons from these, attain to His pleasure, and safeguard yourselves from the chastisement of His fires. He then directed Himself to the heavens; i.e. His design comprehended the heavens, for He gave order and perfection to the seven firmaments. He has full knowledge with everything; knowledge with what benefits you. He therefore created whatever is in the earth for the benefit of you the children of Adam (i.e. human beings). 89

Exegesis of Verse No. 34

This holy Quranic verse reads,

And when We said to the angels, 'Prostrate yourselves before Adam.' They fell prostrate, all save Iblis. He demurred through

pride, and so became a disbeliever. (2:34)

Asking Imam Ali ('a) bout the miracles of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) in comparison with the miracles of the previous prophets, a Jew said, 'As for Adam, Allah made His angels prostrate themselves before him. Did he do such a thing with Muhammad?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

It is true that Allah ordered His angels to prostrate themselves before Adam, but their prostration was not obedience to Adam, which may falsely indicate that they worshipped Adam other than Allah the Almighty and All-exalted; rather, they only prostrated themselves to express the virtue of Adam and the mercy of Allah to him.

As for Muhammad (S), he was granted more virtuous thing than this was. Allah the All-majestic and All- high, in His grandeur, sent blessings upon Muhammad and ordered all the angels to pray His blessings for him. The believers worship Almighty Allah through invoking His blessings upon Muhammad. This was an additional favor to him. 90

Exegesis of Verse No. 45

This holy Quranic verse reads,

Seek help in patience and prayer; and truly it is hard save for the humble- minded. (2:45)

Whenever a terrifying matter troubled Imam Ali ('a), he would hurry to offer a prayer and repeat the holy verse involved.91

He ('a) is also reported to have said,

Whenever an unbearable misfortune afflicts one of you, one must observe fasting, because Allah the All-exalted says, 'Seek help in patience and prayer.' 'Patience' in this verse stands for fasting. 92

Exegesis of Verse No. 46

This holy Quranic verse reads,

(They are those) Who know that they will have to meet their Lord, and that to Him they are returning. (2:46)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

It means that these people are certain that they will be resurrected, raised from the dead, interrogated for their deeds, and then either rewarded for their good deeds or punished for their evildoings. In this verse, the word ‘yasunnuna ‘ means that they are sure. 93

Exegesis of Verse No. 48

This holy Quranic verse reads,

And guard yourselves against a day when no soul will in aught avail another, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be received from it, nor will they be helped. (2:48)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Whoever does not believe in the existence of my (Divine) pond, may Allah never make him approach my pond! Whoever does not believe in my (right of) intercession, may Allah never grant him my intercession! My intercession will be for the people of my community who had committed grand sins. As for the good-doers, they are not answerable. 94

Exegesis of Verse No. 59

This holy Quranic verse reads,

And when Moses said to his people, ‘O my people! You have wronged yourselves by your choosing of the calf (for worship); so, turn in penitence to your Creator and kill yourselves. That will be best for you with your Creator and He will relent toward you. Lo! He is the Relenting, the Merciful. (2:54)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

These people said to Moses, ‘What form must our repentance take?’ He answered, ‘You must kill each other.’ So, they took blades and each one of them started killing his brother, father, and son. They did not care whom they would kill. When seventy thousand persons were killed, Allah the All- exalted revealed to Moses, saying, ‘Order them to stop killing. The killed ones have been forgiven and the survivors’ repentance has been admitted.’ 95

Exegesis of Verse No. 114

This holy Quranic verse reads;

And who does greater wrong than he who forbids the approach to the sanctuaries of Allah lest His name should be mentioned therein, and strives for their ruin? As for such, it was never meant that they should enter them except in fear. Theirs in the world is ignominy and theirs in the Hereafter is an awful doom. (2:114)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

Sanctuaries of Allah include the entire earth, because the Holy Prophet (S) has said, ‘The entire earth has been made a place of prostration for me, and its dust has been made pure.’96

Exegesis of Verse No. 159

This holy Quranic verse reads,

Lo! Those who hide the proofs and the guidance, which We revealed after We had made it clear to mankind in the Scripture, such are accursed of Allah and accursed of those who have the power to curse. (2:159)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have explained this verse to mean the scholars when they turn to corruption.97

Exegesis of Verse No. 186

This holy Quranic verse reads,

And when My servants question you concerning Me, then surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he cries to Me. So, let them hear My call and let them trust in Me, in order that they may be led aright. (2:186)

In his instructive will to his son Imam Al-Hasan (‘a), Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Then He (i.e. Almighty Allah) has placed the keys to His treasuries in your hands in the sense that He has shown you the way to ask Him. Therefore, wherever you wish, open the doors of His favor with prayer and let the abundant rains of His mercy fall on you. Delay in acceptance of the prayer should not disappoint you, because the grant of prayer is according to the measure of your intention.

Sometimes, acceptance of prayer is delayed with a view to its being a source of greater reward to the asker and of better gifts to the expectant. Sometimes, you ask for a thing but it is not given to you, and a better thing is given to you later or a thing is taken away from you for some greater good of yours, because sometimes you ask for a thing, which contains ruin for your religion if it is given to you.

Therefore, your request should be for things whose beauty should be lasting and whose burden should remain away from you. As for wealth, it will not last for you nor will you live for it.

Exegesis of Verse No. 189

The Holy Quran reads,

They ask you concerning the new moon. Say, ‘They are times appointed for the benefit of men, and for the pilgrimage. And it is not righteousness that you should enter the houses at their backs, but righteousness is this that one should guard against evil and go into the houses by their doors and be careful of your duty to Allah, that you may be successful. (2:189)

Al-A•bagh ibn Nubatah reports that he was sitting in the presence of Imam Ali (‘a) when Ibn Al-Kawwa' came and asked, ‘What are the houses about which Allah has said, ‘It is not righteousness that you should enter the houses at their backs’ etc?’’

The Imam (‘a) answered,

We are the houses that Allah has ordered to be come from their gates. We are the door to Allah and the houses of Him from which He must be come. So, whoever follows us and professes the divinely ordained loyalty to us, has in fact come to the houses from their gates; but whoever disagrees with us and prefers others to us, has in fact come to the houses from their backs. 98

Exegesis of Verse No. 253

The Holy Quran reads,

Of those messengers, some of whom We have caused to excel others, and of whom there are some to whom Allah spoke, while some of them He exalted (above others) in degree. And We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs (of Allah's Sovereignty) and We supported him with the holy Spirit. And if Allah had so willed it, those who followed after them would not have fought one with another after the clear proofs had come unto them. But they differed, some of them believing and some disbelieving. And if Allah had so willed it, they would not have fought one with another; but Allah does what He wills. (2:253)

On one occasion, a man asked Imam Ali (‘a), ‘O Amir Al-Mu'minin, these people professed the greatness of Allah as same as we did, professed His being the one and only God as same as we did, and performed the prayers as same as we did. Now, on which basis will we fight against them?’

Imam Ali (‘a) said,

We will fight against them on the basis of this holy Quranic verse’

He then read the holy verse involved, and commented, *"We are the party that believed, and they are the party that disbelieved."*[99]

Exegesis of Verse No. 267

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, spend of the good things which you have earned, and of that which We bring forth from the earth for you, and seek not the bad (with intent) to spend thereof (in charity) when you would not take it for yourselves save with disdain; and know that Allah is Absolute, Owner of Praise. (2:267)

Explaining the phrase tayyibati ma kasabtum (the good things which you have earned), Imam Ali ('a) states that these good things stand for gold and silver. About wa-mimma akhrajna lakum min Al-arsI (and of that which We bring forth from the earth for you), Imam Ali ('a) states that these things include all seeds, fruits, and whatever is subjected to the religious zakat tax.[100]

Surah Al-'Imran
Exegesis of Verse No.7

The Holy Quran reads,

He it is Who has revealed unto you (Muhammad) the Scripture wherein are clear revelations. They are the substance of the Book and others (which are) allegorical. But those in whose hearts is doubt pursue, forsooth, that which is allegorical seeking (to cause) dissension by seeking to explain it. None knows its explanation save Allah and those who are of sound instruction; they say: We believe therein; the whole is from our Lord; but only men of understanding really heed. (3:7)

About the clear and the allegorical revelations, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Each and every verse in the Holy Quran has four meanings; apparent, inward, provision, and clear. The apparent meaning stands for the mean-

ing understood from reciting the verse, which is, in other words, the purport and the apparent meaning of the word. The inward meaning is what is actually meant by the verse. The provision stands for the laws that reveal what is legal and what is illegal to do. The clear meaning stands for what Almighty Allah wants His servant to understand from the verse. [101]

The holy Quranic verse involved condemns those who follow the allegorical revelations and cite them as evidence on their false beliefs, intending for nothing but sedition and corruption. Imam Ali ('a) has also condemned these people, saying,

When a problem is put before anyone of them, he passes judgment on it from his imagination. When exactly the same problem is placed before another of them, he passes an opposite verdict. Then, these judges go to the chief (i.e. a deviate ruler) who had appointed them and he confirms all the verdicts, although their God (i.e. Almighty Allah) is One (and the same), their Prophet is one (and the same), and their Book (i.e. the Quran) is one (and the same).

Is it that Allah ordered them to differ and they obeyed Him? Or He prohibited them from it but they disobeyed Him? Or (is it that) Allah sent an incomplete faith and sought their help to complete it? Or they are His partners in the affairs, so that it is their share of duty to pronounce and He has to agree? Or is it that Allah the Glorified sent a perfect faith but the Prophet fell short of conveying it and handing it over (to the people)? The fact is that Allah the Glorified says,

'We have not neglected anything in the Book (i.e. the Holy Quran). (6:38)'

And He says that one part of the Quran verifies another part and that there is no divergence in it as He says,

'And if it had been from any other than Allah, they would surely have found in it much discrepancy. (4:82)'

Certainly, the outside of the Quran is wonderful and its inside is deep (in meaning). Its wonders will never disappear, its amazements will never pass away, and its intricacies cannot be cleared except through itself. 102

The holy Quranic verse involved also demonstrates that none can recognize the actual interpretation of the revelations except Almighty Allah and those who are firm in knowledge and sound in instruction; namely, the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a). Referring to this fact, Imam Ali (‘a), in one of his discourses with Mu’awiyah, says,

O Mu’awiyah, the Quran is verily true, illumination, true guidance, mercy, and remedy for the faithful believers. However, for those who do not believe, there is deafness in their ears and the Quran is blindness for them.

O Mu’awiyah, Allah the Almighty and All-majestic has not left any category of devious people as well as those who invite others to Hellfire without being refuted and put under an argument from the Quran. He has then warned against following them, revealing in this respect clear-cut Quranic texts that some people understood while others could not. I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying,

‘Each and every verse in the Quran has inward and outward meanings and each and every letter in the Quran has an interpretation.’ Yet, ‘None knows its explanation save Allah and those who are firm in knowledge.’ Those who are firm in knowledge are namely we (i.e. the Holy Prophet’s Household). Then, Allah ordered the community to say,

‘We believe therein; the whole is from our Lord; but only men of understanding really heed.’ He has also ordered them to submit to us. In this respect, Allah says, ‘If they had referred it to the messenger and to such of them as are in authority, those among them who are able to think out the matter would have known it.(4:83)’

The Ahl Al- Bayt (‘a) are those who must be questioned about the Holy Quran, since they alone can answer.103

Exegesis of Verse No. 19

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! Religion with Allah is Islam (i.e. surrender to the will and guidance of Allah). Those who formerly received the Scripture differed only after knowledge came unto them, through transgression among themselves. Whoever disbelieves the revelations of Allah, then Allah is swift at reckoning. (3:19)

About the religion of Islam, Imam Ali ('a) says,

I will define Islam in such a way that no one else has defined before me and no one will be able to do after me. Islam is submission, submission is conviction, conviction is affirmation, affirmation is acknowledgement, acknowledgement is discharge of obligations, and discharge of obligations is action.

Verily, a true believer receives his beliefs from his Lord and never receives it from his personal opinion.

O people, abide by your religion! Abide by your religion and hold fast to it. Do not let anyone pull you off, because a sin while following this religion is better than a good deed while following another religion, since to commit a sin in this religion may be forgiven, but to do a good deed outside it, will not be accepted. 104

Exegesis of Verse No. 27

The Holy Quran reads,

You cause the night to pass into the day, You cause the day to pass into the night, You bring forth the living from the dead, You bring forth the dead from the living, and You give sustenance to whom You choose without stint. (3:27)

About Almighty Allah's sustenance, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Sustenance is of two kinds: a sustenance that you seek and a sustenance that seeks you, which is such that if you do not reach it, it will come to you. Do not make yourself worry about your present day, because the

sustenance of each day of your lifetime will suffice you from being concerned about it. If the new day has been already determined to be within the days of your lifetime, then Allah the All-exalted will bring to you what He has decided for you in the new day, but if the new day has not been decided to be within the days of your lifetime, then it is improper that you care for what is not yours.

No seeker of sustenance will be able to precede you to your predetermined sustenance and no one, no matter how strong he is, will be able to overcome you with regard to the sustenance that has been decided for you earlier. What has been decided for you will not fail to reach you. 105

Exegesis of Verse No. 28

The Holy Quran reads,

Let not the believers take disbelievers for their friends in preference to believers. Whoso does that has no connection with Allah unless it be that you guard yourselves against them, taking as it were security. Allah bids you beware only of Himself. Unto Allah is the journeying. (3:28)

Although this holy Quranic verse has forbidden any connection between the believers and the unbelievers, it has made some exceptions in such states like self-protection (taqiyyah).

About the legality of taqiyyah, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Almighty Allah has ordered you to practice taqiyyah (i.e. self-protection) in the affairs of your religion, for He says, 'Beware lest you expose yourself to destruction and lest you abandon practicing self-protection, which I have ordered you to practice.

If you do it not, you will expose the blood of your brethren-in-faith and you to shedding, you will cause their and your blessings to be faded away, and you will cause them and yourself to humiliation at the hands of the enemies.' Verily, Allah the All-exalted has ordered you to maintain dignity of your brethren-in-faith. 106

Exegesis of Verse No. 68

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! Those of humankind who have the best claim to Abraham are those who followed him, and this Prophet and those who believe with him; and Allah is the Protecting Guardian of the believers. (3:68)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Those of humankind who have the best claim of the prophets are those who are the most acquainted with what these prophets came with.

The Imam (‘a) then cited the holy verse involved as evidence. He then continued to say,

Verily, the patron of Muhammad is only one who obeys Allah even if he has no family relationship with the Prophet. Similarly, the true enemy of Muhammad is only one who disobeys Allah, even if he has a close family relationship with the Prophet. 107

Exegesis of Verse No. 81

The Holy Quran reads,

And when Allah made a covenant through the prophets: Certainly, what I have given you of Book and wisdom-- then a messenger comes to you verifying that which is with you, you must believe in him, and you must aid him. He said: Do you affirm and accept My compact in this (matter)? They said: We do affirm. He said: Then bear witness, and I (too) am of the bearers of witness with you. (3:81)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Since Adam and on, Almighty Allah made covenants with all of the prophets that they should believe in and support Muhammad (S) if he

would be sent in their lifetimes. He also ordered them all to make the same covenant with their communities.

Imam Ali ('a) is also reported to have said about this holy Quranic verse,

Almighty Allah had made covenant with the prophets who came before our Prophet that they should inform their communities about his advent, describe him for them, give them the good tidings of his advent, and order them to give credence to him. 108

Exegesis of Verse No. 96

The Holy Quran reads,

Most surely, the first house appointed for men is the one at Bakkah, blessed and guidance for the nations. (3:96)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have been asked whether the Sacred House was the first house on earth. He ('a) answered,

No, it was not. There were other houses before this House. Rather, it was the first blessed house appointed for people, since it holds true guidance, mercy, and blessings. It was the first house built by (Prophet) Abraham.

The House was then reconstructed by some Arab people from the Yemenite tribe of Jurhum. The House was then demolished, but the Giants (i.e. 'amaliqah) rebuilt it. It was once again demolished, but the people of the tribe of Quraysh rebuilt it. 109

Imam Ali ('a) is also reported to have said,

Houses were built before the construction of the Sacred House (i.e. the Ka'bah); rather, it was the first house to be dedicated to worshipping Almighty Allah. 110

Exegesis of Verse No. 102

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, be careful of your duty to Allah with the care, which is due to Him; and do not die unless you are Muslims. (3:102)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

By Allah, none carried out this verse except the members of the Holy Prophet's Household. We mention Almighty Allah in such a way that we never forget Him. We thanked Him in such as way that we never show ingratitude to Him. We obeyed Him in such a way that we never go against Him. 111

Exegesis of Verse No. 133

The Holy Quran reads,

And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden the extensiveness of which is as the heavens and the earth; it is prepared for those who are righteous. (3:133)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Verily, you shall never win Paradise except by means of piety and righteousness. 112

Exegesis of Verse No. 149

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, if you obey those who disbelieve, they will turn you back upon your heels, so you will turn back losers. (3:149)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that this holy verse was revealed about the situation of Abdullah ibn Ubayy who was with the Holy Prophet (S) in the Battle of Uhud when other Muslims absconded. He thus went on shouting at the Muslims,

'Go back to your brethren-in-faith! Go back to your religion!' 113

Exegesis of Verse No. 200

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah; that you may prosper. (3:200)

Imam Ali ('a) explains 'perseverance' to mean waiting for the times of prayers so as to perform them in their best times.[114]

Surah Al-Nisa'
Exegesis of Verse No. 1

The Holy Quran reads,

O mankind, be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain has spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom you claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs (that bare you). Lo! Allah has been a watcher over you. (4:1)

About this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Build good relationships with your relatives at least by means of exchanging greetings with them, for Allah the All-exalted says, 'Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom you claim your rights of one another, and toward the wombs that bare you.' [115]

Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah is reported to have heard Imam Ali ('a) saying,

One of you may be angered so violently that he will never become satisfied until he enters Hellfire because of that anger. Therefore, whoever of you becomes angry with a family member, should reach out and touch him, because when kinship is touched, it calms down. Kinship is hanged to the Divine Throne wherefrom it calls out, 'O Allah, please build good

relationship with whoever regards me, and rupture Your relationship with whoever ruptures me.' 116

Exegesis of Verse No. 23

The Holy Quran reads,

Forbidden unto you are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your father's sisters, your mother's sisters, your brother's daughters, your sister's daughters, your foster-mothers, your foster-sisters, your mothers- in-law, and your step-daughters who are under your protection (born) of your women unto whom you have gone in - but if you have not gone in unto them, then it is no sin for you (to marry their daughters) - and the wives of your sons who (spring) from your own loins. And (it is forbidden unto you) that you should have two sisters together, except what has already happened (of that nature) in the past. Lo! Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful. (4:23)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

You are forbidden to marry your stepdaughters along with their mothers that you have gone in unto them, even if they were in your labs before or after you have gone in unto their mothers. 117

Exegesis of Verse No. 29

The Holy Quran reads,

And kill not yourselves. Lo! Allah is ever Merciful unto you. (4:29)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have asked the Holy Prophet (S) as to how those who have splints (i.e. a strip of rigid material used to support and immobilize a broken limb when set) fixed on their broken organs can perform the ritual ablution (i.e. wusu') and can perform the ritual bathing when they are ceremonially impure.

The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

'For such people, it is acceptably sufficient to rub water over the splints.'

Imam Ali ('a) further asked,

'In case that one anticipates malady if one pours water on one's body in order to perform the ritual ablutions and bathing, then what can such a person do?'

The Holy Prophet (S), answering this question, read the holy Quranic verse involved.[118]

Exegesis of Verse No. 58

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! Allah commands you that you restore deposits to their owners, and, if you judge between humankind, that you judge justly. Lo! Comely is this, which Allah admonishes you. Lo! Allah is ever Hearer, Seer. (4:58)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

It is obligatory upon a leader to judge according to what Allah has revealed and to restore the deposits. If he does so, then it is obligatory upon people to listen to and obey him and to respond when they are called. [119]

Exegesis of Verse No. 59

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority. And if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger if you are in truth believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end. (4:59)

Jabir ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari has reported that when this holy Quranic verse was revealed, he said to the Holy Prophet (S), 'O Allah's Messenger, we know Allah and His Messenger, but who

are those in authority the obedience to whom has been matched by Allah to the obedience to you?'

The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

O Jabir, these are my vicegerents. The first of them is Ali ibn Abi Talib. Then comes Al-Hasan. Then comes Al-Husayn. Then comes Ali the son of Al-Husayn. Then comes Muhammad the son of Ali whom is named in the Torah Al-Baqir (i.e. the splitter of knowledge). You, Jabir, will catch him. When you meet him, send my greetings to him. Then comes Al-Sadiq (i.e. the most veracious) Ja'far the son of Muhammad. Then comes Musa the son of Ja'far. Then comes Ali the son of Musa.

Then comes Muhammad the son of Ali. Then comes Muhammad the son of Ali. Then comes Al- Hasan the son of Ali. Then comes my namesake Muhammad who holds the same kunyah (i.e. epithet) of me. He is the Argument-person of Allah on His lands and the one who represents Allah's vestige amongst His servants.

He is the son of Al-Hasan the son of Ali. At his hands, Allah exalted be His mention shall conquer the east and the west of the globe. He shall be occulted from his partisans and devotees so long that none will be steadfast in accepting his Imamate (i.e. divinely-ordained leadership) except those whom Allah has tried their hearts in true faith.

Jabir asked, 'O Allah's Messenger, will his partisans be benefited from him during his occultation?'

The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

Yes, they will. I swear this by the One Who has sent me as prophet; they will derive from his illumination and benefit from their loyalty to him despite his occultation as same as other people benefit from the sun when it is overcast by clouds. O Jabir, this is one of the hoarded secrets of Allah and the stored knowledge of Him. So, try to keep it concealed except from those who are worthy enough to receive it. 120

Abu-Basir has reported that Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir ('a) said,

This holy verse (i.e. the one involved) was revealed to express the Divinely ordained loyalty to Ali ibn Abi Talib('a).

Abu-Basir asked, 'People say: If it is so, then what has prevented the Quran from mentioning the name of Ali and the Ahl Al-Bayt openly?'

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir ('a), instructing his disciple, said, you may answer them as follows:

When Almighty Allah ordered of performing the prayers through His revelations, He did not specify whether the units of these prayers should be three or four; rather, it was the Messenger of Allah (S) who explained these details to them. Likewise, Almighty Allah ordered of going on the Hajj pilgrimage through His revelations, but He did not order them to circumambulate the Holy Ka'bah seven times; rather, it was the Messenger of Allah (S) who explained these details. Almighty Allah also revealed this holy verse:

'O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority,' to express the obligatory loyalty to Ali, Al-Hasan, and Husayn (in their capacity as the next leaders of the community). The Messenger of Allah (S) hence said, 'As for whoever has taken my as his master, Ali is now his master.'

He (S) also said, 'I order you all to adhere to the Book of Allah and to my Household. I have besought Allah not to separate the two from one another until they join me on the Divine Pond, and He responded to my prayer.'

He (S) also said, 'Do not try to guide them (i.e. the members of the Prophet's Household) what to do, because they are always more knowledgeable than you are. They shall never lead you out of any door of true guidance and they shall never take you into any door of misguidance.' If the Messenger of Allah (S) had kept silent and had not referred to the very people intended in that holy verse, such people like the families of Al- 'Abbas, 'Aqil, and other persons would have claimed being part of the Ahl Al-Bayt.

Therefore, Almighty Allah has revealed in His Book saying, 'Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House, and to purify you a thorough purifying.' So, it was incumbent to interpret this holy verse by stating that it included Ali, Al-Hasan, Al-Husayn, and Fatimah exclusively.

Therefore, the Messenger of Allah (S) took the hands of Ali, Fatimah, Al-Hasan, and Al-Husayn, placed them under the cloak at the chamber of Ummu-Salamah, and said, 'O Allah, every prophet has precious folks and family members. These are my precious folks and family members.' Ummu-Salamah asked, 'Am I not one of your family members?' The Messenger of Allah (S) answered, 'You are heading towards a good result, but these ones are my precious folks and family members.' 121

Sulaym ibn Qays has reported that Imam Ali ('a), once, said to him,

Verily, the least of that with which a servant (of Allah) is considered straying off is when he does not know the Authority of Allah the Most Blessed and Most High and does not know His witness over His servants. The Authority about whom Allah the Most Majestic and Most Holy has commanded His servants to obey and has made it obligatory upon them to show love and affection are the ones divinely appointed as guardians of the community.

Sulaym asked, 'O Amir Al-Mu'minin, describe them (the people who possess Divine Authority) for me.'

The Imam ('a) said,

They are those whom Allah the Most Majestic and Most Holy has mentioned along with His Own Self and His Holy Prophet saying, 'O you who believe, obey Allah, His Messenger, and your leaders (people who possess Divine Authority)...'

Sulaym asked, 'O Amir Al-Mu'minin, may Allah keep my soul in service for your cause! Explain it to me.'

The Imam (‘a) said,

They (people who possess Divine Authority) are those about whom the Messenger of Allah in his last sermon on the day that Allah the Most Majestic and Most Holy took him (from this world) said, ‘I leave among you behind me two matters. If you hold firmly to these two, you will never stray off: the book of Allah and my descendants, my family.

The Most Subtle and Most Expert Allah has informed me that these two will never separate from each other until they will arrive before me at the pond in Paradise like this he joined his index finger and thumb not like this he joined his middle finger and thumb so that one may proceed before the other. If you hold firmly to these two, you will not slip or stray off; and if you precede others to them, you will certainly stray off.’ 122

Exegesis of Verse No. 69

The Holy Quran reads,

Whoso obeys Allah and the messenger, they are with those unto whom Allah hath shown favor, of the prophets and the saints and the martyrs and the righteous. The best of company are they. (4:69)

Imam Ali (‘a) reported that a man from the Ansar came to the Holy Prophet (S) and asked, ‘O Allah’s Messenger, I cannot stand being away from you. It frequently happened that as soon as I entered my house, you came to my mind; therefore, I leave my place and come to see you on account of my fondness of you. You have mentioned that, on the Resurrection Day, you will be allowed to enter Paradise and raised to the highest top of it. Then, how will I be able to see you?’

Immediately, Almighty Allah revealed the verse involved. So, the Holy Prophet (S) called that man and recited the verse before him, giving him the good tidings that whoever obeys Almighty Allah and His Messenger will be accompanied with him and granted

the blessing of coming with the prophets, the veracious people, the martyrs, and the righteous ones.123

Exegesis of Verse No. 86

The Holy Quran reads,

When you are greeted with a greeting, greet you with a better than it or return it. Lo! Allah takes count of all things. (4:86)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have passed by a group of people and greeted them with the greeting of Islam: Peace be upon you. They answered back, 'Peace, Allah's mercy, blessings, forgiveness, and pleasure be with you.'

The Imam ('a), disagreeing with such surplus answer, said to them,

Do not exceed the limits; rather, you should imitate the angels who said to our father Abraham, 'Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you, O people of the House.' One of the other forms of greeting in Islam is that when someone sneezes, it is required to say to him, 'May Allah show mercy to you.' He then must answer back, 'May Allah forgive and have mercy on you.' This is so because Allah the All-exalted says, 'When you are greeted with a greeting, greet you with a better than it.' 124

Exegesis of Verse No. 97

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! As for those whom the angels take (in death) while they wrong themselves, (the angels) will ask, 'In what were you engaged?' They will say, 'We were deemed weak in the land.' (4:97)

About defining those who are deemed weak (mustas'afun), Imam Ali ('a) says,

The attribute of being deemed weak is not applicable to those to whom the argument of Allah has been conveyed in such a manner that their ears

heard it and their hearts (i.e. minds) understood it. 125

Exegesis of Verse No. 101

The Holy Quran reads,

And when you go forth in the land, it is no sin for you to curtail (your) worship if you fear that those who disbelieve may attack you. In truth, the disbelievers are an open enemy to you. (4:101)

Imam Ali ('a) reported that a group of merchants, once, asked the Holy Prophet (S) how should they perform prayers when they are on journeys. As a result, the holy verse involved was revealed to show that they should perform the prayers in the shortened form when they are on journeys.

A year after that, the Holy Prophet (S) was on a military expedition when he stood up to perform the Midday Prayer. At that moment, the enemies decided to attack him, but some of them suggested that they would postpone the attack, because the Prophet (S) would perform another similar prayer. In the time between the two prayers, Almighty Allah revealed the other section of the holy verse that reads,

If you fear lest those who disbelieve may attack you' In truth, the disbelievers are an open enemy to you. And when you (O Muhammad) are among them and lead them in the prayer, let only a party of them stand with you to perform the prayer. (4:101-2)

Thus, the ritual Alarm Prayer (salat Al-khawf) was decided.126

Exegesis of Verse No. 128

The Holy Quran reads,

If a woman fears ill treatment from her husband or desertion, it is no sin for them twain if they make terms of peace between themselves. Peace is better. (4:128)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

If one of the two wives of a husband becomes unable (to satisfy him sexually) or is ugly, and the husband intends to separate from her, she can agree with him that he may sleep with her a single night and sleep with the other wife (0r wives) several nights so that he will not separate from her for good. There is no objection to this act if she is satisfied with it. However, if she retreats from her agreement, the husband is then required to treat her as same as he treats the other wife. 127

Exegesis of Verse No. 164

The Holy Quran reads,

And messengers We have mentioned unto you before and messengers We have not mentioned unto you; and Allah spoke directly unto Moses. (4:164)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The direct speaking of Almighty Allah to (Prophet) Moses is that the speaking did not need for organs, tools of speaking, lips, or uvula. Allah is too Glorified and Exalted to be described as having such material things. 128

Surah Al-Ma'idah
Exegesis of Verse No. 1

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, fulfill your indentures. The beast of cattle is made lawful unto you (for food) except that which is announced unto you (herein), game being unlawful when you are on the pilgrimage. Lo! Allah ordains that which pleases Him. (5:1)

Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas is reported to have said, ‘Whenever the phrase, ‘O you who believe’ is revealed, Ali was always the head and principal of it.129

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

Wherever the phrase ‘O you who believe ‘ exists in the Quran, the phrase ‘O you who are poor ‘ existed opposite to it in the Torah. 130

Exegesis of Verse No. 6

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, when you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe your heads and your feet to the ankles. (5:6)

The apparent meaning of this holy verse entails that, to perform the ritual ablution, the faces and hands must be washed and the heads and feet must be rubbed.

Imam Ali (‘a) adopted this apparent meaning; he therefore decided the illegality of rubbing the sandals instead of the feet. It is reported that he (‘a), once, passed by a man who was performing the ritual ablution. The man rubbed his sandals instead of feet and went to the mosque to perform a prayer. The Imam (‘a) grasped him and said,

‘How is it legal for you to perform a prayer before performing the ritual ablution?’

The man answered, ‘’Umar ibn Al-Khattab ordered me to do so?’ The Imam (‘a) took the man before ‘Umar and said to him,

‘Listen to what this man is reporting from you.’

‘Umar said, ‘This is true. I have ordered him to do so, because Allah’s Messenger rubbed the sandals.’ The Imam (‘a) asked,

‘Did Allah’s Messenger do so before or after the revelation of Surah Al-Ma'idah?’

'Umar answered, 'I do not know.' The Imam ('a) reproachfully said to 'Umar,

'When you do not know, why have you then issued a verdict in this respect? The Book of Allah has repealed the rubbing of the sandals.' 131

Exegesis of Verse No. 42

The Holy Quran reads,

(They are) listeners of a lie, devourers of the illicit gain; therefore, if they come to you, judge between them or turn aside from them. And if you turn aside from them, they shall not harm you in any way. And if you judge, judge between them with equity. Surely, Allah loves those who judge equitably. (5:42)

When he was asked for an explanation of the illicit gain, Imam Ali ('a) answered,

The illicit gain is the bribe.

When he was asked about the ruling appertained to those who gain illicit things, the Imam ('a) answered,

It is decided as atheism. 132

Exegesis of Verse No. 66

The Holy Quran reads,

And if they had kept up the Torah and the Gospel and that which was revealed to them from their Lord, they would certainly have eaten from above them and from beneath their feet. There is a party of them keeping to the moderate course, and (as for) most of them, evil is that which they do. (5:66)

It is reported that Imam Ali ('a) once called the chief of the Catholic and the bishop and said to them,

I will ask you both about a matter; so, do not conceal the true answer, because I know it better than you two do.

The Imam (‘a) then asked the bishop,

I adjure you by Allah Who has revealed the Gospel to Jesus and made blessings flow on his foot; therefore, Jesus could heal the blind and the leprous, remove the eye aches, restore the dead to life, make for you birds from mud, and inform you about what you eat and what you store.

The bishop said, ‘I will be true with you even if you have not put me under this oath.’

The Imam (‘a) thus asked,

To how many parties did the children of Israel separate after Jesus?

The bishop said, ‘No, by Allah! They did not separate even to one party.’

The Imam (‘a) replied,

You have told an untruth! By Allah save Whom there is no other god (I swear), they separated into seventy-two parties all of whom will deserve Hellfire except one party. Allah says, ‘There is a party of them keeping to the moderate course, and (as for) most of them, evil is that which they do.’ 133

Exegesis of Verse No. 95

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, do not kill game while you are on pilgrimage. And whoever among you shall kill it intentionally, the compensation of it is the like of what he killed, from the cattle, as two just persons among you shall judge, as an offering to be brought to the Ka'bah, or the expiation of it is the feeding of the poor or the equivalent of it in fasting, that he may taste the unwholesome result of his deed. Allah has pardoned what is gone by. And who-

ever returns to it, Allah will inflict retribution on him. And Allah is Mighty, Lord of Retribution. (5:95)

Answering a man who had asked him about the offering that should be brought to the Holy Ka'bah, Imam Ali ('a) said,

The offering must be one of the eight in pairs (i.e. sheep, goats, camels, and cows).

As if this answer did not convince the asker, the Imam ('a) asked him,

Do you read the Quran?

The man answered in the affirmative, and the Imam ('a) further asked,

Have you heard Almighty Allah saying (in the Holy Quran): 'O you who believe, fulfill the obligations. The cattle quadrupeds are allowed to you''?

The man answered with yes, and the Imam ('a) further asked,

Have you heard Almighty Allah saying (in the Holy Quran): '(And to every nation We appointed acts of devotion) that they may mention the name of Allah on what He has given them of the cattle quadrupeds''?

The man said yes, and the Imam ('a) further asked,

Have you heard Almighty Allah saying (in the Holy Quran): 'Eight in pairs-- two of sheep and two of goats' and two of camels and two of cows''?

The man answered affirmatively, and the Imam ('a) further asked,

Have you heard Almighty Allah saying (in the Holy Quran): 'O you who believe, do not kill game while you are on pilgrimage. And whoever among you shall kill it intentionally, the compensation of it is the like of

what he killed, from the cattle, as two just persons among you shall judge, as an offering to be brought to the Ka'bah''?

The man answered with assent, and the Imam ('a) further asked,

If I kill an antelope, what expiation will I have to undergo?

The man replied, 'You must undergo a sheep (to be slaughtered in expiation).'

The Imam ('a) added,

It must be intended as offering brought to the Holy Ka'bah, must it not?

The man answered, 'Yes, it must be.'

The Imam ('a) thus concluded,

Then, Almighty Allah has described it as 'offering brought to the Ka'bah' as you can see in the Quran. 134

Exegesis of Verse No. 101

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, do not put questions about things which, if declared to you, may trouble you, and if you question about them when the Quran is being revealed, they shall be declared to you. Allah pardons this; and Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing. (5:101)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Verily, Allah has put you under certain duties; therefore, do not violate them. He has also defined for you certain limits; so, do not exceed them. He has warned you against doing certain things; so, do not defy them. Likewise, He has kept silent towards certain things, which He has not left them on account of forgetting; therefore, do not overburden yourselves with these things. 135

Exegesis of Verse No. 105

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, take care of your souls; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way. To Allah is your return of all (of you); so, He will inform you of what you did. (5:105)

About self-discipline, Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said many words some of which will be cited hereinafter:

i. The gravest ignorance is self-ignorance.

ii. The most wonderful sagacity is self-recognition.

iii. The most self-recognizing ones are the most fearful of their Lord.

iv. It is very strange for one who has lost his own self to look for a lost thing of him instead of looking for his own self.

v. One who has ignored his self, how can he recognize his Lord?

vi. The utmost of knowledge is self-recognition.

vii. To recognize oneself is sufficient knowledge and to ignore oneself is sufficient ignorance.

viii. Whoever recognizes himself truly will deprive himself of the worldly pleasures.

ix. Whoever recognizes himself will struggle against it, and whoever ignores himself will neglect it.

x. Whoever recognizes himself will deem great all his affairs.

xi. Whoever recognizes himself well will have attained the top of all knowledge and erudition.

xii. Whoever fails to recognize himself will be aloof from the path of salvation and will flounder in deviation and ignorance.

xiii. Self-recognition is the most beneficial of all recognitions.

xiv. Do not ignore yourself, because one who ignores oneself is actually ignorant about all things.[136]

Surah Al-An'am
Exegesis of Verse No. 110

The Holy Quran reads,

And We turn their hearts and their sights, even as they did not believe in it the first time, and We will leave them in their inordinacy, blindly wandering on. (6:110)

Imam Ali ('a) says,

Verily, jihad (struggle) that you are going to practice is practical, which must be followed by jihad in the hearts. Hence, whoever does not in his inner self regards the good as good and deems the evil as evil will have his heart turned upside down and then no good deed of him will be ever accepted (since he himself does not see with his heart the good as good).[137]

Surah Al-A'raf
Exegesis of Verses No. 8 & 9

The Holy Quran reads,

And the measuring out on that day will be just. Then, as for him whose measure is heavy, those are they who shall be successful; and as for him whose measure is light, those are they who have made their souls suffer loss because they disbelieved in Our communications. (7:8-9)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

He whose outward form is weightier than his inward form, his scale will be weightless on the Resurrection Day, and he whose inward form is

weightier than his outward form, his scale will be heavy on the Resurrection Day. 138

Imam Ali ('a) is also reported to have said in this connection,

To have heavy measures and to have light measures stand for the weighing up of the good deeds. These good deeds make one's scale heavy while the evil deeds make one's scale light. 139

Exegesis of Verse No. 46

The Holy Quran reads,

And between the two there shall be a veil, and on the most elevated places there shall be men who know all by their marks, and they shall call out to the dwellers of the garden: Peace be on you; they shall not have yet entered it, though they hope. (7:46)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

We are on the most elevated places. We recognize our supporters by their marks. We are the most elevated places that no one can recognize Allah except by means of recognizing us. We are the most elevated places; on the Resurrection day, we shall stand in a place between Paradise and Hellfire. So, none will be allowed Paradise except those whom we have recognized and who have recognized us. None will be sent to Hellfire except those whom we have denied and who have denied us. This is the meaning of Almighty Allah's saying'

The Imam ('a) then recited the holy verse involved.140

On another occasion when he was asked about the exegesis of the holy verse involved, Imam Ali ('a) answered,

On the Resurrection Day, we will stand in a place between Paradise and Hellfire. As for those who have supported us, we will recognize them by their marks and allow them to Paradise, and as for those who have hated us, we will also recognize them by their marks and send them to Hellfire. 141

Exegesis of Verse No. 54

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! Your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then mounted He the Throne. He covers the night with the day, which is in haste to follow it, and has made the sun, the moon, and the stars subservient by His command. His verily is all creation and commandment. Blessed be Allah the Lord of the Worlds. (7:54)

When he was asked about the Divine Throne, Imam Ali ('a) answered as follows:

The angels bear the Throne, which is not something like a chair as some people think; rather, it is something that is limited, created, and fashioned nicely. Your Lord the Almighty and All- majestic is the owner of the Throne, but this does not imply that He may sit on it like things that sit on other things. 142

The head of the catholic once asked Imam Ali ('a), 'Is it Allah Who carries the Throne or is it the Throne that carries Allah?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

Allah the Almighty and All-majestic carries the Thrones, the heavens, the earth, all things that are in these two, and all things that lie between them. This is the meaning of His saying,

'Lo! Allah grasps the heavens and the earth that they deviate not, and if they are to deviate, there is not one that can grasp them after Him. Lo! He is ever Clement, Forgiving. (35:41)'

The head of the catholic then asked, 'Tell me about His words,

'The angels will be around the heavens and on that day eight of them will carry the Throne of your Lord above all the creatures. (69:17)'

How has He said it? You have just said that He carries the heavens, the earth, and all that is between them.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

Allah the Most High created the Throne from four lights: from a red light wherefrom the redness became red, a green light from which the greenness became green, and yellow light whereby the yellowness became yellow. He created it from a white light wherefrom it is white and it is the knowledge which Allah has made the carriers to carry and that is the light of His greatness.

With His greatness and His light, He has given sight to the hearts of believers. Because of His greatness and light, the ignorant ones have become His enemies. Through His greatness and light, all that which is in the heavens and in the earth, as well as all of His creatures, seek to reach Allah the Most Holy and Most High by means of their various deeds and mixed religions. All that is carried; Allah carries them with the light of His greatness and power.

They are not able to do any benefit or harm, death or life, or resurrection. All things are carried. Allah the Most Holy and Most High preserves them from banishment and He has control over both of them (i.e. the heavens and the earth). He is the life of all things and the light of all things. Glorious is He, the Most High, and He is far above what they say about Him. He is very High above them with Greatness.

The man then said, 'Tell me about Allah; where is He?'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

He is here. He is there, above, below, encompassing us, and with us as He has said,

'There is not a single place wherein any secret counsel can take place among any three people without Allah being the fourth, nor five people without His being the sixth nor any gathering of more

or fewer people, wherever it may be, without His being with them' (58:7)'

Al-Kursi (the Divine Chair) contains the heavens and the earth and all that is between them and below the soil. If you say anything aloud, He knows the secrets and the hidden as mentioned in His words:

'The heavens and the earth are under His dominion (contained in His Al-Kursi). He does not experience fatigue in preserving them both. He is the High and the Greatest. (2:255)'

Thus, those who carry the Throne are the scholars whom Allah has made to bear His knowledge. Nothing of what Allah has created in the heavens and in the earth can be out of these four that He has shown to those whom he has chosen. He showed them to His friend Abraham, saying,

'Also, We showed Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth to strengthen his faith. (6:75)'

How can the carriers of the Throne carry Allah when with life from Him their hearts receive life and with His light they find guidance to know Him? 143

Exegesis of Verse No. 138

The Holy Quran reads,

And We brought the Children of Israel across the sea, and they came unto a people who were given up to idols, which they had. They said, 'O Moses! Make for us a god even as they have gods.' He said, 'Lo! You are a folk who know not.' (7:138)

A bishop once said to Imam Ali ('a), 'You could not stay after your Prophet more than thirty years until you used swords to strike each other.'

The Imam ('a) answered,

As for you, your feet were not dried up from the water of the sea until you said to your Prophet, 'Make for us a god even as they have gods!' 144

Exegesis of Verse No. 143

The Holy Quran reads,

And when Moses came to Our appointed tryst and his Lord had spoken unto him, he said, 'My Lord! Show me (Your Self) that I may gaze upon You.' He said, 'You will not see Me, but gaze upon the mountain! If it stands still in its place, then you will see Me.' And when his Lord revealed (His) glory to the mountain, He sent it crashing down. And Moses fell down senseless. And when he woke, he said, 'Glory unto You! I turn unto You repentant and I am the first of (true) believers.' (7:143)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Having uttered whatever words of praise of Almighty Allah he could say, Prophet Moses asked his Lord a calamitous question: 'My Lord! Show me Yourself so that I may look upon You.'

Allah the All-blessed and All-exalted answered, 'You cannot bear to see me, but look at the mountain, if it remains firm in its place, then will you see me.' Hence, our Lord made some of His signs and manifested His glory to the mountain that was immediately broken up and 0crumbled. Moses fell down in a swoon. Then, Allah enlivened and pardoned him. Moses expressed, 'Glory be to You. I turned to You, and I am the first of the believers.' This means that he believed, before others, that it is impossible to see Allah. 145

Once, Imam Ali ('a) addressed the people in the Mosque of Al-Kufah from the pulpit and a man called Dhi'lib, a very good orator and brave in heart asked, 'O Amir Al-Mu'minin, have you seen your Lord?'

The Imam (‘a) replied,

O Dhi’lib, how I worship a lord whom I do not see?

The man said, ‘O Amir Al-Mu’minin, how have you seen Him?’

The Imam (‘a) said,

O Dhi’lib, the eyes are not able to see Him physically but it is the hearts that see Him through the reality of belief. O Dhi’lib, my Lord is Subtle in subtleties but cannot be described by means of subtle matters. My Lord is Great but cannot be described by means of greatness. His greatness surpasses all greatness but he cannot be described by means of any such greatness. He is Glorious in His Glory but He cannot be described in terms of intensity. He is before everything and it cannot be said that something was before Him.

He will be after all things but it cannot be said that there will be something after Him. He willed the existence of things but not by means of first thinking about it. He comprehends things but not with a great deal of effort. He is in all things but is not mixed with them, nor is He separate from them. He is clearly manifest but not with contacts and changes. He shines but not in the form of being found out with eyesight.

He is far but not in the form of distance. He is near but not in the form of nearness. He is very fine but not in the form of physical fineness. He exists but not after nothingness. He acts but not because of being forced. He measures things but not by means of movement. He wills but not by means of thinking. He hears but not with tools. He sees but not with instruments. He is not contained in place and held up in times.

Attributes do not limit Him and slumber does not seize Him. His Being was before the time and His Existence was before nothingness. He was before eternity. His giving the sense of awareness proves that He does not need tools of sensing. His giving substance to the substances is proof that His Self is not a substance. The existence of a contrary to everything is proof that there is nothing contrary to Him. His giving comparability to things is proof that there is nothing similar to Him.

He has made the light contrary to the darkness, the wetness to the dryness, the harshness to the softness and the coldness to heat. He combines the separating ones and separates their closeness. The separation among things is evidence of the existence of the One who causes separation in them and their combination is evidence of the existence of the One who combines them. It is just as Allah has said,

'We have created everything in pairs so that perhaps you may take heed. (51:49)'

He has made a distinction between the before and the after in order to show that there is neither before nor after for Him. The instincts show that the One Who created the instincts Himself has no instinct. The time is evidence that there is no timing for the One Who made the time. His hiding things from each other stands as evidence that nothing hides them from their Creator. He was the Lord when there was nothing to enjoy His Lordship. He was to be worshipped when there was no worshipper. He had the knowledge when there was nothing to know. He was hearing when there was nothing to hear. 146

Demonstrating his unmatched faith, Imam Ali ('a) used to say,

I have not seen anything but that I could see Allah before it. 147

On many occasions, Imam Ali ('a) used to say,

I would never worship a god that I could not see. 148

Exegesis of Verse No. 159

The Holy Quran reads,

And of Moses' folk, there is a community who lead with truth and establish justice therewith. (7:159)

Within his discourse with the head of the catholic and the bishop, Imam Ali('a) is reported to have said to them,

I will ask you about a matter; therefore, do not conceal the true answer, because I know it better than you both do. O head of the catholic, I adjure you by the One Who has revealed the Torah to Moses, fed his people the manna and the quails, struck for them a dry path in the sea, and exploded for them twelve springs from the rocks of the mount; each spring for each clan of the children of Israel I adjure you by Him to answer me as to how many parties the children of Israel separated after the departure of Moses.

The head of the catholic answered, 'They were always one party only.'

The Imam ('a) answered,

You have told an untruth! I swear this by the One save Whom there is no god. They separated into seventy-one parties all of whom will be in Hellfire except one. Allah says, 'And of Moses' folk, there is a community who lead with truth and establish justice therewith.' This is the only party that will receive redemption. 149

Exegesis of Verses 163-166

The Holy Quran reads,

Ask them (O Muhammad) of the township that was by the sea, how they did break the Sabbath, how their big fish came unto them visibly upon their Sabbath day and on a day when they did not keep Sabbath came, they not unto them. Thus did We try them for that they were evil-livers. And when a community among them said, 'Why preach you to a folk whom Allah is about to destroy or punish with an awful doom?' They said, 'In order to be free from guilt before your Lord and that haply they may ward off (evil).' And when they forgot that whereof they had been reminded, We rescued those who forbade wrong, and visited those who did wrong with dreadful punishment because they were evil-livers. So, when they took pride in that which they had been forbidden, We said unto them, 'Be you apes despised and loathed.' (7:163-6)

About the explanation of these holy verses, Imam Al-Baqir (‘a) is reported to have said,

In the Book of Ali (‘a), I have read the following:

Almighty Allah decided to put to test a people from ´lah from Thamud; therefore, big fishes were driven near them on Saturdays. The fishes appeared near their quarters and houses in the rivers and streams on the days of the Sabbath. They ran to catch and eat them. They kept on this act for a long time, but the rabbis did not warn them against violating the Sabbath and the scholars did not prevent them from catching these fishes. Satan also inspired to some of them that they had been forbidden to eat fishes on Saturdays but they had not been forbidden to catch them on such days.

Therefore, they used to catch fishes on Saturdays and eat them on the other days. A party of them declared, ‘We will catch these fishes at this time.’ Another group took the right side and said, ‘We warn you against violating Allah’s order lest you will expose yourselves to His punishment.’ A third party withdrew to the left side, kept silent, and did not give any advice. They thus said to the party that warned them, ‘Why do you preach a folk whom Allah is about to destroy or punish with an awful doom?’ The preaching party said, ‘We do so in order to be free from guilt before your Lord and that haply they may ward off evil.’ Almighty Allah then says, ‘When they forgot that whereof’’

This means that when they neglected the preachment that was given to them, they went on committing the sin. So, the party that had preached them said, ‘By Allah, we will never join you and we will never spend a single night in your city where you have disobeyed Allah, because we fear lest the misfortune that will afflict you will also include us.’

They therefore left that city for fear of the misfortune that would afflict these sinners. They resided at a place near the city and spent that night outdoors. The next morning, the saints of Allah who had obeyed the order of Him went to the city to see what had happened to the disobedient people. When they stopped at the gate of the city, they found it closed. They knocked at the gate but received no answer.

They then brought a ladder and climbed the wall of the city. They ordered one of them to overlook the city and he saw that all the people therein were transmuted into apes with tails. Hence, they broke the gate and the apes could recognize their relatives among the human beings but the human beings could not recognize their relatives among those whom were metamorphosed into apes. Hence, the obedient people said to them, 'Have we not warned you?'

Imam Ali ('a) added,

I swear by Him Who split the grain and created the souls, I do know the likes of these apes among the individuals of this community; they neither deny nor try to change any evil matter; rather, they deserted what they had been ordered to do and separated from the truth. Hence, Allah says, 'Away with the unjust people!' He also says, 'So, when they neglected what they had been reminded of, We delivered those who forbade evil and We overtook those who were unjust with an evil chastisement because they transgressed.'

Exegesis of Verse No. 172

The Holy Quran reads,

And when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants, and made them bear witness against their own souls: 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes! We bear witness.' Lest you should say on the day of resurrection, 'Surely, we were heedless of this. (7:172)

It is reported that Ibn Al-Kawwa', once, asked Imam Ali ('a), 'Had Allah spoken to any of the children of Adam before he spoke to Moses?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

Yes, He had. He spoke to all of His creatures, both the righteous and the sinful, and they all answered Him back.

Ibn Al-Kawwa' asked, 'How is that?'

The Imam (‘a) answered,

Do you not read the Book of Allah Who says to His Prophet, ‘And when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants, and made them bear witness against their own souls: ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They said, ‘Yes!’’? Allah did make them hear His words and they did answer Him as you, O Ibn Al-Kawwa', can hear Allah’s saying, ‘They said, ‘Yes!’’ So, Almighty Allah said to them, ‘I am Allah; there is no god save Me. I am the All-beneficent, the All-merciful.’

They all submitted to Him, confirming that they should obey Him, and professed that He was their Lord. Almighty Allah then distinguished the messengers, the prophets, and the prophets’ successors and ordered the creatures to obey them. They professed to this in the Eternal Covenant. When they did, the angels said, ‘O children of Adam, now we bear witness against you so that on the Resurrection Day, you will not be able to say that you were heedless of this.’ 150

Surah Al-Anfal
Exegesis of Verse No. 15

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, when you meet those who disbelieve marching for war, then turn not your backs to them. (8:15)

Condemning those who flew the battlefield, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

Verily, planting terror and fear in the hearts of the enemies is part of struggling against those against whom jihad is deservingly necessary, since they support each other on deviation from the religion. They also deserve to be deprived of this world and to be exposed to humiliation and ignominy. It also makes those who flee the battlefields deserve Hellfire. Allah the Almighty and All-majestic says, ‘O you who believe, when you meet those who disbelieve marching for war, then turn not your backs to them.’ 151

Surah Al-Tawbah

Exegesis of Verse No. 12

The Holy Quran reads,

And if they break their oaths after their agreement and openly revile your religion, then fight the leaders of unbelief surely, their oaths are nothing so that they may desist. (9:12)

Applying the meaning of this holy verse to the party of ʻA'ishah during the Battle of the Camel, Imam Ali (ʻa) said to his companions,

Do not hasten towards fighting these people sooner than that I may release myself from any responsibility before Almighty Allah and before them.

The Imam (ʻa) then delivered a speech, saying,

O people of Al-Basrah, do you find me unjust in any judgment that I have made?

They answered with a no. The Imam (ʻa) said,

Have you ever found me unfair in any distribution amongst you?

They answered in the negative. The Imam (ʻa) said,

Have you stood against me and breached your allegiance to me because I seized a worldly affair for my family members and myself exclusively?

They answered with a denial. The Imam (ʻa) then said,

Have I, while applying the religious penal laws on you, exempted other people from them?

They answered with no. The Imam (ʻa) then asked,

Now, what for is your pledge of allegiance to me being broken while your pledges of allegiance to others are kept effective? When I pondered over

the matter thoroughly, I could not find any reason except one of two: either disbelief or strikes of swords.

The Imam (‘a) then turned to his companions and said to them,

Allah the All-blessed and All-exalted says in His Book, ‘And if they break their oaths after their agreement and openly revile your religion, then fight the leaders of unbelief surely, their oaths are nothing so that they may desist.’ I swear by Him Who split the grain, created the souls, and chose Muhammad exclusively for Prophethood; these people are the very ones intended in this holy verse. 152

The Imam (‘a) also cited this holy Quranic verse as proof on his reaction to the cheatings of Talhah and Al-Zubayr and to their breaching of allegiance to him. He (S) thus said,

My excuse for fighting against Talhah and Al-Zubayr is that after they had pledged allegiance to me voluntarily without any coercion, they breached their allegiance for no reason and for no innovative action that might took place.

The Imam (‘a) then recited the holy verse involved.153

Exegesis of Verse No. 36

The Holy Quran reads,

Surely, the number of months with Allah is twelve months in Allah's ordinance since the day when He created the heavens and the earth, of these four being sacred. That is the right reckoning. Therefore, be not unjust to yourselves regarding them and fight the polytheists all together as they fight you all together. And know that Allah is with those who guard against evil. (9:36)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

When the final ailment of the Messenger of Allah (S) intensified, he said, ‘O people, a year consists of twelve months four of which are sacred.’ Counting with his fingers, the Messenger of Allah (S) said, ‘Rajab is sep-

arate; Dhu'l-Qa'dah, Dhu'l-Hijjah, and Muharram are three successive (sacred) months.' 154

Exegesis of Verse No. 67

The Holy Quran reads,

The hypocritical men and the hypocritical women are all alike; they enjoin evil and forbid good and withhold their hands. They have forsaken Allah; so, He has forsaken them. Surely, the hypocrites are the transgressors. (9:67)

Explaining a phrase in this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

As the hypocrites forsook Almighty Allah in this world and refrained from acting upon obedience to Him, he will forsake them in the other world by giving them no reward at all. Thus, they will become forsaken from any prosperity.155

Surah Yunus
Exegesis of Verse No. 2

The Holy Quran reads,

Is it a wonder to the people that We revealed to a man from among themselves, saying, 'Warn the people and give good news to those who believe that theirs is a footing of firmness with their Lord.' The unbelievers say, 'This is most surely a manifest enchanter.' (10:2)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

The good news to the believers will be the intercession of the Holy Prophet for them on the Resurrection Day. 156

Exegesis of Verse No. 26

The Holy Quran reads,

For those who do good is good reward and more than this; and blackness or ignominy shall not cover their faces. These are the dwellers of the garden; in it they shall abide forever. (10:26)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have sent a letter to Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr, instructing him to explain the word 'good reward' as Paradise and the word 'more than this' as this world.157

Exegesis of Verse No. 62

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! Verily, the friends of Allah are those on whom fear comes not, nor do they grieve. (10:62)

Abdullah ibn 'Abbas reported that Imam Ali ('a), when was asked about the implication of this holy verse, said,

The friends of Allah (mentioned in this holy verse) are people who served Him, the All-exalted, sincerely. They looked in the interior of this world when the other people saw it from its exterior appearance. They thus recognized that it would eventually come to an end while the other people were seduced by its current pleasures.

They therefore deserted the aspects of it that would forsake them and deadened the aspects of it that would kill them. O he who indulges in this world, runs after its traps, and works hard towards constructing what will eventually ruin!

Have you not considered the passing away of your ancestors before you and the abodes of your descendants under rocks and dust? How many of them have you nursed with your own hands and nurtured with your own palms when you brought them physicians and asked the dear ones to visit them? However, your care for them did not benefit them and your medicines did not cure them. 158

Surah Hud
Exegesis of Verse No. 6

The Holy Quran reads,

And there is not a beast in the earth but the sustenance thereof depends on Allah. He knows its habitation and its repository. All is in a clear Record. (11:6)

Imam Ali ('a) used to say,

You, O people, must know certainly that Allah will not permit a servant (of Him) to do more than what has been counted to him in the Wise Reminder, even if he exerts excessive efforts, finds more ways, and practices exaggerative endeavors. Likewise, Allah will never preclude what has been counted in the Wise Reminder from a servant despite his weakness and lack of practice.

O people, neither cleverness nor will idiocy add or reduce a single atom of one's previously decided lot. He who realizes this fact and acts upon it will surely be the calmest in profits, while he who disregards this fact will be the weariest in loss. It often happens that he whom is bestowed with graces is waylaid through that bestowment, while he whom people see as unlucky is in fact fortunate.

Sober up, O listener, from your inebriety, wake up from your inadvertence, slow down your haste, and ponder over Allah's words that are not reneged and that are inescapable and unavoidable. Then, forsake your pride, leave your arrogance, take heed, and remember your grave and abode, because it will be your passage and destiny. You will be treated as exactly as you treated and you will harvest only what you sowed, and whatever you did will be done to you.

Tomorrow, you will indisputably find only the results of what you did. Benefit by considering the admonition that has been provided to you. Understand what you have listened to and what you have been promised, because, through this, you will be undoubtedly engaged in one of two matters: either to obey Allah and follow what you have heard, or to have Allah's claim instituted against you and you should then submit to it according to your knowledge.

Beware, and keep up seriousness. No one can tell you the truth in the way that an expert reporter can do. One of the firm decisions of Allah in the Wise Reminder upon which He bestows reward or gives punishment, and through which He likes or dislikes, is that it will not benefit a man, even though he exerts himself and acts sincerely if he leaves this world to meet Allah with one of these acts without repenting, namely that he believed in a partner with Allah during his obligatory worship, or appeased his own anger by killing an individual, or declared an act but he opted for another, or sought fulfillment of his needs from people by introducing an innovation in his religion, or met people with a double face, or moved among them with a double tongue, using arrogance, or pride.

Understand this, because an illustration is a guide for its like. Beasts are concerned with their stomachs. Carnivores are concerned with assaulting others. Women are concerned with the adornments of this ignoble life and the creation of mischief herein. On the other hand, the true believers are humble, admonishers, and afraid of Allah. 159

Exegesis of Verse No. 17

The Holy Quran reads,

Is he (to be counted equal with them) who relies on a clear proof from his Lord, and a witness from Him recites it, and before it was the Book of Moses, an example and a mercy? Such believe therein, and whoso disbelieves therein of the clans, the Fire is his appointed place. So, be not you in doubt concerning it. Lo! It is the truth from your Lord; but most of mankind believe not. (11:17)

Exegetes of the Holy Quran confirm that the one 'who relies on a clear proof from his Lord' is the Holy Prophet (S) and the one who is 'a witness for him' is Imam Ali ('a). Referring to this fact, Imam Ali ('a) says,

If the pillow (i.e. seat of power) had been folded for me, I would have judged between the people of the Torah according to their book, between the people of the Gospel according to their book, and between the people

of the Quran according to their book with such judgment that flourishes while it ascends to Allah.

By Allah, no single verse in the Book of Allah that was revealed at night or on day but that I know the reason for its revelation. No one who has attained maturity but that a verse from the Book of Allah was revealed about him to drive him to Paradise or to Hellfire.

One of the audience stood up and asked, 'O Leader of the Believers, what is the verse that was revealed about you?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

You should have heard Allah saying, 'Is he (to be counted equal with them) who relies on a clear proof from his Lord, and a witness from him recites it'' The Messenger of Allah (S) is the one 'who relies on a clear proof from his Lord,' and I am the witness for and from him. 160

Exegesis of Verse No. 40

The Holy Quran reads,

(Thus it was) until, when Our commandment came to pass and the oven gushed forth water, We said, 'Load therein two of every kind, a pair (the male and female), and your household, save him against whom the word has gone forth already, and those who believe. And but a few were they who believed with him. (11:40)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

When (Prophet) Noah accomplished building the ark, the appointment between his Lord and him with regard to destroying his people was the gushing forth of an oven. When the oven gushed forth at the house of a woman, she declared, 'The over has gushed forth.' He therefore hurried to seal the oven.

Water gushed forth and Noah allowed whomever he wished to embark on the ark and prevented others whom he wished not to embark on it from

being there. He then came to the sealing of the oven and removed it. Allah the Almighty and All-majestic thus says,

'Then opened We the gates of heaven with pouring water and caused the earth to gush forth springs, so that the waters met for a predestined purpose. And We carried him upon a thing of planks and nails. (54:11-13) 161

Exegesis of Verse No. 56

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Not an animal but He does grasp it by the forelock. Lo! My Lord is on a straight path. (11:56)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

This means that Allah the All-exalted is always right; He awards good for good deeds and punishes the evil with evil. He also pardons whomever He wishes and forgives. All glory and all exaltation be to Him. 162

Exegesis of Verse No. 105

The Holy Quran reads,

On the day when it comes, no soul will speak except by His permission; some among them will be wretched, others glad. (11:105)

This holy verse indicates that human beings are of two categories; either wretched or glad. The wretched will be led to Hellfire while the glad to Paradise. It is reported that Imam Ali ('a) was attending a funeral procession when he picked up a rod, hit the ground with it, and said,

Every one of you has had his final place recorded for him; either in Paradise or in Hellfire.

Some of the attendants asked, 'Shall we not work and depend upon our deeds (to win Paradise and to avoid Hellfire)?'

The Imam ('a) said,

You must work, because each one of you will be granted easiness to attain what he has been created for.

'As for him who gives and is dutiful (toward Allah and believes in goodness, surely, We will ease his way unto the state of ease. (92:5-7)'

However, this saying of Imam Ali ('a) requires clarification. Those who asked the Imam ('a) had the wrong idea that each person had been already decided to be in Paradise or in Hellfire; therefore, there is no need to do acts that are said to make one win Paradise or to refrain from doing the acts that are said to lead to Hellfire. They also had the wrong idea that Paradise and Hellfire had been already predetermined and none had the choice in this matter.

However, these wrong ideas have been refuted by Imam Ali ('a) who confirmed that Almighty Allah had made accessible to win Paradise, since He had not forced any person to do what he does. In other words, the path that takes to Paradise requires us to have faith in Almighty Allah, to fear Him, and to do nice actions.

Therefore, if one adopts these things, one will surely win Paradise, since it is optional to act upon these deeds or to refrain from doing them. In brief, Paradise is obtained and Hellfire is decided according to the beliefs and deeds of every person who is not, yet, coerced to do this deed or to violate this prohibition.

Exegesis of Verse No. 114

The Holy Quran reads,

Establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night. Those things that are good remove those

that are evil. Be that the word of remembrance to those who remember their Lord. (11:114)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have come to the people and asked,

In your view, what is the most hopeful verse of the Holy Quran?

Answering him, some of them cited this holy Quranic verse:

Surely, Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases. And whoever associates anything with Allah, devises indeed a great sin. (4:48)

The Imam (‘a) answered,

This verse is good, but it is not the one intended.

Others cited the following holy verse as the most hopeful:

Say: O my servants who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Surely, Allah forgives the faults altogether. Surely, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. (39:53)

However, the Imam (‘a) answered,

This verse is good, but it is still not the one intended.

Some others cited the following holy verse:

And those who, when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults and who forgives the faults but Allah? and (who) do not knowingly persist in what they have done. (3:135)

Yet, the Imam (‘a) said,

This verse is good, but it is yet not the one intended.

People then kept silent. After a pause, they said, 'By Allah, we have nothing more to add.'

The Imam ('a) thus said,

I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, 'The most hopeful verse in the Book of Allah is this one:

'Establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night. Those things that are good remove those that are evil. Be that the word of remembrance to those who remember their Lord. (11:114)'

He then said to me, 'O Ali, I swear by Him Who has sent me with the truth as conveyor of good tidings and as a warner; when one of you sets out to perform the ritual ablution, his sins fall down from his organs. When he starts his prayer with pure face and heart, he will not accomplish the prayer before all of his sins are erased and he thus returns as sinless as the day on which his mother gave birth to him. If he commits something between two prayers, the same thing will be granted to him, and the same thing is repeated for the five prayers.

O Ali, the similitude of the five prayers for my community is exactly like a flowing river at the door of your houses. What do you think to occur to the dirt that is stuck to your body when you wash yourselves in that river five times a day? Will any part of that dirt remain? Similarly, the five prayers do the same thing to my community.' 163

Surah Al-Ra'd
Exegesis of Verse No. 4

The Holy Quran reads,

And in the earth there are tracts side by side and gardens of grapes and corn and palm trees having one root, and (others) having distinct roots; they are watered with one water, and We make some of them excel others in fruit. Most surely, there are signs in this for a people who understand. (13:4)

Jabir ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari is reported to have heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying to Imam Ali ('a),

O Ali, all people are from various trees, but you and I are from the same tree.

The Holy Prophet (S) then recited the holy verse involved.164

Exegesis of Verse No. 17

The Holy Quran reads,

He (i.e. Allah) sends down water from the cloud, then water-courses flow with water according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam, and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of making ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it; thus does Allah compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it tarries in the earth; thus does Allah set forth parables. (13:17)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

The 'scum' mentioned in this verse stands for the baseless exegesis of the Holy Quran that is claimed by the atheists. This exegesis vanishes, proves to be vain, and declines when the true explanation is obtained. 'That which benefits people' stands for the revelation that falsehood cannot approach neither from the front nor from the back. Hearts thus accept this revelation. The 'earth' in this verse stands for the place and source of knowledge. 165

Exegesis of Verse No. 24

The Holy Quran reads,

Peace be on you because you were constant. How excellent then the issue of the abode is. (13:24)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Patience is of three kinds: Patience at the time of suffering hardship, patience in performing acts of obedience (worship), and patience to stop one from committing what Allah has prohibited. For one who exercises patience at the time of suffering hardship until one passes it by with grace and goodness, Allah writes down three hundred degrees. Each is distant from the other as the sky is distant from the earth.

Whoever exercises patience in performing the acts of obeying (worshipping), Allah writes for him six hundred degrees. Each is apart from the other as the core of the earth is distant from the Divine Throne. Whoever exercises such patience that stops one from committing what Allah has prohibited, Allah writes for him nine hundred degrees. Each is apart from the other as is the core of the earth is distant from the upper end of the Divine Throne.166

Exegesis of Verse No. 28

The Holy Quran reads,

Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah. Now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest. (13:28)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

When this holy verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah (S) said, ‘This verse indicates those who love Allah and His Messenger, who love the members of my Household honestly but not falsely, and who love the faithful believers in their presence and when they are absent. Verily, by Allah’s remembrance they love each other.’ 167

Surah Ibrahim
Exegesis of Verse No. 9

The Holy Quran reads,

Has not the account reached you of those before you, of the people of Noah, 'Ad, Thamud, and those after them? None knows them but Allah. Their messengers come to them with clear arguments, but they thrust their hands into their mouths and said, 'Surely, we deny that with which you are sent, and most surely we are in serious doubt as to that to which you invite us.' (14:9)

It is reported that a genealogist met Imam Ali ('a) and expressed that he was the most experienced in this field because he knew the descents and lineages of all people. The Imam ('a) said,

You cannot have knowledge with all peoples.

However, the man insisted on his view. The Imam ('a) thus asked him, Have you noticed the saying of Allah the All-exalted,

'And the tribes of 'Ad, Thamud, and the dwellers in Al-Rass, and many generations in between. (25:38)'?

The man said, 'Yet, I know the majority of these peoples.'

The Imam ('a) said,

Have you noticed the saying of Allah the All-exalted,

'Has not the account reached you of those before you, of the people of Noah, 'Ad, Thamud, and those after them? None knows them but Allah.'?(14:9)

The man then kept silent and could not find any answer.[168]

Exegesis of Verse No. 24

The Holy Quran reads,

Have you not considered how Allah sets forth a parable of a good word being like a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches are in heaven? (14:24)

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (‘a) is reported to have said,

The tree (mentioned in the holy verse) is the Messenger of Allah, its branch is Ali, the essence of the tree is Fatimah , the fruit of the tree is the descendants of Fatimah , the leaves and twigs of the tree are the devotees (i.e. Shi’ah) of Fatimah . When a man from our devotees dies, a leaf of the tree falls to the ground. When one of our devotees is born, a leaf grows up in the place of the falling one. 169

Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas reported that Archangel Gabriel said to the Holy Prophet (S),

You are the tree, Ali its twig, Fatimah its leaves, and Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn its fruits. 170

Exegesis of Verse No. 28

The Holy Quran reads,

Have you not seen those who have changed Allah’s favor for ungratefulness and made their people to alight into the abode of perdition? (14:28)

About this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

Those who have changed Allah’s favors for ungratefulness are the two most licentious clans of Quraysh; namely, the Banu-Umayyah and the Banu’l-Mughirah. As for the Banu’l-Mughirah, Almighty Allah cut off their roots on the day of the Battle of Badr. As for the Banu-Umayyah, Allah gave them respite to some time. 171

Surah Al-Hijr
Exegesis of Verse No. 2

The Holy Quran reads,

Often will those who disbelieve wish that they had been Muslims. (15:2)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

As for the monotheist committers of grand sins from all the nations, when they die neither regretting their grand sins nor repenting from them, their eyes, in Hellfire, will not turn blue, their faces will not be blackened, they will not be attached with the devils, chains will not be put on their necks, they will not be made to swallow the boiling drink, and they will not be made to put on shirts made of liquid pitch.

Allah will save their bodies from being abided everlastingly in Hellfire because of their belief in the Unity of Allah and will save their faces from being burnt in the Fire because of their prostration before Him. Some of them will be set to fire up to their heels, others will be set to fire up to their necks according to each one’s sins and acts of disobedience.

Some of them will abide in Hellfire for one month only and they will be then allowed to leave it. The longest period of abiding in Hellfire will be the duration of this world since its creation and up to its termination.

The Jews, Christians, and followers of other religions and faiths who are abided in Hellfire will then say to the believers in the Unity of Allah who are abided therein, ‘You have believed in Allah, His Books, and His messengers. Nevertheless, we and you are now in Hellfire equally!’

These words will enrage Almighty Allah in such an unprecedented way; He will therefore allow the monotheist inhabitants of Hellfire to leave it toward a spring found between Paradise and the Discriminating Bridge where they will be implanted like ruffles on scum. They will be then allowed to Paradise while their foreheads carry this inscription: ‘These are the people of Hellfire whom the All-beneficent Lord has released therefrom.’ They will then abide in Paradise as long as Allah wishes for them to abide. Thereafter, they will ask Almighty Allah to erase that mark from their foreheads, and Almighty Allah will send angels to erase these inscriptions.

Then, Almighty Allah will send other angels with nails made of fire to fix the inhabitants of Hellfire with them. Thus, the inhabitants of Par-

adise will be distracted by the blessings and pleasures they will find therein. This is the meaning of Allah's saying, 'Often will those who disbelieve wish that they had been Muslims.' 172

Exegesis of Verse No. 44

The Holy Quran reads,

It (Hellfire) has seven gates; for every gate there shall be a separate party of them. (15:44)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Hellfire has seven storeys one above the other. Allah the All-exalted has put Paradise widthways and put the fires vertically one above the other. Hence, the lowest storey is Jahannam . Lasa comes next. Al-autamah comes next. Saqar comes next. Al-Jahim comes next. Al-Sa 'ir comes next. Al-Hawiyahcomes next. 173

Exegesis of Verse No. 85

The Holy Quran reads,

And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them two but in truth; and the hour is most surely coming; so, turn away with kindly forgiveness. (15:85)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

The kindly forgiveness is to pardon without blame. 174

According to another narration, Imam Ali ('a) said,

The kindly forgiveness is to be pleased without blame. 175

Surah Al-Nahl

Exegesis Of Verse No. 2

The Holy Quran reads,

He sends down the angels with the Spirit of His command unto whom He wills of His bondmen, (saying): Warn mankind that there is no god save Me; so, keep your duty unto Me. (16:2)

It is reported that Imam Ali (‘a) was once asked whether the Spirit was or was not the same as Archangel Gabriel.

The Imam (‘a) answered,

Gabriel is one of the angels while the Spirit is not Gabriel.

This answer did not convince the asker who accused the Imam (‘a) of saying an unacceptable thing. However, the Imam (‘a), providing evidence, said,

You are devious and you are depending upon the words of the devious people. Allah says to His Prophet, ‘The commandment of Allah will come to pass; so, seek not you to hasten it. Glorified and Exalted be He above all that they associate with Him. He sends down the angels with the Spirit’’

The Spirit is thus different from the angels. 176

Exegesis Of Verse No. 16

The Holy Quran reads,

And landmarks (too), and by the star they find a way.(16:16)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

The star by which they find a way is the Capricorn, because it does not revolve. The building of the Ka’bah was founded on the direction of this star. Through this star too, the travelers by lands and by sea find their ways. 177

Exegesis Of Verse No. 30

The Holy Quran reads,

And it is said unto those who ward off evil, 'What has your Lord revealed?' They say, 'Good.' For those who do good in this world there is a good reward and the home of the Hereafter will be better. Pleasant indeed will be the home of those who ward off evil. (16:30)

In his epistle to the people of Egypt, Imam Ali ('a) wrote down the following statements:

O servants of Allah, when a servant engages himself with acts of obedience to Almighty Allah and works sincerely toward repentance from sins, he becomes the closest to His forgiveness and mercy. So, adhere to fear of Allah, because it gathers for you all items of prosperity, which cannot be found in any other way. Through fear of Allah too, the welfare of this world and the welfare of the other world are attained together. Allah the Almighty and All-majestic says,

'And it is said unto those who ward off evil, 'What has your Lord revealed?' They say, 'Good.' For those who do good in this world there is a good reward and the home of the Hereafter will be better. Pleasant indeed will be the home of those who ward off evil.' 178

Exegesis Of Verse No. 70

The Holy Quran reads,

And Allah creates you, then causes you to die, and among you is he who is brought back to the most abject stage of life, so that he knows nothing after (having had) knowledge. Lo! Allah is Knower, Powerful. (16:70)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

The most abject stage of life is the age of seventy-five. 179

Exegesis Of Verse No. 90

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! Allah enjoins justice and kindness, and giving to kinsfolk, and forbids lewdness and abomination and wickedness. He exhorts you in order that you may take heed. (16:90)

Imam Ali (‘a), once, passed by a group of people who were discussing a matter. He asked them as to what the matter they were discussing, and they answered that their topic was the manners that grant good personality. The Imam (‘a) thus said to them,

Is it not sufficient for you to infer these manners from the Book of Allah that reads, ‘Lo! Allah enjoins justice and kindness, and giving to kinsfolk, and forbids lewdness and abomination and wickedness. He exhorts you in order that you may take heed.’ Justice stands for fairness, and kindness stands for doing favors. 180

Surah Al-Isra'

Exegesis Of Verse No. 102

The Holy Quran reads,

He (Moses) said, ‘In truth, you know that none sent down these (portents) save the Lord of the heavens and the earth as proofs, and lo! (for my part) I deem you lost, O Pharaoh!’ (17:102)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

By Allah, the enemy of Allah (i.e. Pharaoh) did not know; rather, the one who knew was Moses. 181

Surah Al-Kahf

Exegesis Of Verse No. 83

The Holy Quran reads,

They will ask you of Dhu'l-Qarnayn. Say, 'I shall recite unto you a remembrance of him.' (18:83)

When he was asked about Dhu'l-Qarnayn, Imam Ali ('a) said,

Dhu'l-Qarnayn (the two-horned) was neither a prophet nor a king, and his two horns were made of neither gold nor silver. Rather, he was one of the servants of Allah. As he loved Allah, Allah in turn loved him, and as he worked sincerely for Allah, Allah in turn guided him to the truth.

He was given the name of Dhu'l-Qarnayn because he invited his people to serving Allah the Almighty and All-majestic, but they hit him on his head. He then left them for a while and returned to them. They once again hit him on the head. Among you is one who is like Dhu'l-Qarnayn! 182

Imam Ali ('a), by saying, 'Among you is one who is like Dhu'l-Qarnayn,' referred to himself, because his head would also be hit by sword for the second time after it had been hit by sword during his duel with 'Amr ibn Abd-Wudd.

Exegesis Of Verse No. 103

The Holy Quran reads,

Say, 'Shall We inform you who will be the greatest losers by their works?' (18:103)

When he was asked about the greatest losers mentioned in this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) answered,

They are the licentious people of Quraysh. 183

Surah Maryam

Exegesis Of Verse No. 11

The Holy Quran says,

Then, he came forth unto his people from the sanctuary, and signified to them, 'Glorify your Lord at break of day and fall of night.' (19:11)

When Imam Ali ('a) was asked about the significance of the word wahy (inspiration, revelation' etc), he said,

The word wahy can be classified into many categories: the wahy of Prophethood, the wahy of inspiration, the wahy of signification, the wahy of command, the false wahy, the wahy of estimation, the wahy of information, and the wahy of message. An example of the wahy of Prophethood is this saying of Almighty Allah:

'Lo! We have revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him, as We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and as We imparted unto David the Psalms. (4:163)'

An example of the wahy of inspiration is this saying of Almighty Allah:

'And your Lord taught the bees to build its cells in hills, on trees, and in (men's) habitations. (16:68)'

An example of the wahy of signification is this saying of Almighty Allah:

'Then, he came forth unto his people from the sanctuary, and signified to them, 'Glorify your Lord at break of day and fall of night.'' This means that he signified to them that they should glorify the Lord' etc.(19:11)

An example of the wahy of command is this saying of Almighty Allah:

'And when I inspired the disciples, saying, 'Believe in Me and in My messenger.' (5:111)'

An example of the false wahy is this saying of Almighty Allah:

'Thus have We appointed unto every prophet an adversary: devils of humankind and jinn who inspire in one another plausible discourse through guile. (6:112)'

An example of the wahy of estimation is this saying of Almighty Allah:

'Then He ordained them seven heavens in two days and inspired in each heaven its mandate. (41:12)'

An example of the wahy of information is this saying of Almighty Allah:

'And We made them chiefs who guide by Our command, and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds and the right establishment of worship and the giving of alms, and they were worshippers of Us. (21:73)' 184

Exegesis Of Verse No. 25

The Holy Quran reads,

And shake the trunk of the palm-tree toward you, you will cause ripe dates to fall upon you. (19:25)

Imam Ali ('a), in his discourse about the advantages of ripe dates, cited this holy verse as evidence, saying,

A pregnant will not eat anything and will not use anything as medicine better than ripe dates. Allah the All-exalted says, 'And shake the trunk of the palm-tree toward you, you will cause ripe dates to fall upon you. So, eat and drink and be consoled.' 185

Exegesis Of Verse No. 85

The Holy Quran reads,

On the day when We shall gather the righteous unto the Beneficent as a band. (19:85)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have asked the Holy Prophet (S) about the exegesis of this holy verse; so, the Holy Prophet (S) answered,

O Ali, a band (wifd) cannot be a true band unless its people are on horseback. These people feared Allah the Almighty and All-majestic; He therefore loved them, endued them with special favors, admitted their deeds, and gave them the name of muttaqin(i.e. pious). 186

Imam Ali ('a) also reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have explained this holy verse by saying,

By Allah, these people will not be resurrected on their feet and will not be driven a violent driving; rather, they will be brought she-camels from Paradise the like of which has never been seen by any creature. The luggage of these she-camels will be made of gold and their bridles made of aquamarine. They will ride these camels until they knock at the gate of Paradise. 187

Surah Taha

Exegesis Of Verse No. 5

The Holy Quran reads,

The Beneficent Lord, Who is established on the Throne. (20:5)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

This means that the management of Almighty Allah is unchangeably established and His ordain is always elevated. 188

Exegesis Of Verse No. 67

The Holy Quran reads,

And Moses conceived a fear in his mind. (20:67)

Imam Ali (‘a), explaining this holy verse, says,

Moses did not fear for himself; rather, he feared lest the ignorant ones would be triumph and the misleading ruling authorities would be the prevalent. 189

Exegesis Of Verse No. 88

The Holy Quran reads,

Then, he (Al-Samiri) produced for them a calf, of saffron hue, which gave forth a lowing sound. And they cried, ‘This is your god and the god of Moses, but he has forgotten.’ (20:88)

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

When Moses rushed to meet his Lord, Al-Samiri collected jewelry of the children of Israel as much as he could, made of it a calf, and cast the handful (from the footstep of the messenger) into the interior of that statue, causing it to be an image of a calf that had a mooing sound. Al-Samiri then said to them, ‘This calf is the god of Moses and the god of you all!’ However, Aaron said to them, ‘‘Has not your Lord promised you a fair promise?’ 190

Surah Al-Anbiya'

Exegesis Of Verse No. 35

The Holy Quran reads,

Every soul must taste of death, and We try you with evil and with good, for ordeal. And unto Us you will be returned. (21:35)

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) was sick when some of his friends visited him and asked about his current state. He (‘a) answered,

I am in evil!

Astonished by this answer, they said,

'You have never said such a word and you are not expected to use such expressions.'

The Imam ('a) explained,

Allah the All-exalted says, 'We try you with evil and with good, for ordeal.' Good stands for health and richness, while evil stands for sickness and poverty. 191

Exegesis Of Verse No. 47

The Holy Quran reads,

And We set a just balance for the Day of Resurrection so that no soul is wronged in aught. Though it be of the weight of a grain of mustard seed, We bring it. And We suffice for reckoners. (21:47)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

The just balance is the scales of justice. On the Resurrection Day, people will be weighed up on the scales of justice. Likewise, Allah the All-blessed and All-exalted will judge between the people according to the balance of justice. 192

Exegesis Of Verse No. 101

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! Those unto whom kindness has gone forth before from Us, they will be far removed from thence. (21:101)

In his discourse with Imam Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

O Ali, your devotees (Shi'ah) and you shall be on the Divine Pond to serve whomever you like from its water and to prevent whomever you hate from approaching it. On the day of the Supreme Horror, you will be the secured ones. About you, this verse was revealed: 'Lo! Those unto whom kindness has gone forth before from Us, they will be far removed from thence.' About you too, this verse was revealed:

'The Supreme Horror will not grieve them, and the angels will welcome them, (saying): This is your Day which you were promised. (21:103)'

Exegesis Of Verse No. 104

The Holy Quran reads,

The Day when We shall roll up the heavens as a recorder rolls up a written scroll. As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it. (It is) a promise (binding) upon Us. Lo! We are to perform it. (21:104)

In his speech about the dead, Imam Ali ('a) says,

So now, certainly I frighten you from this world for it is sweet and green, surrounded by lusts, and liked for its immediate enjoyments. It excites wonder with small things, is ornamented with false hopes, and decorated with deception. Its rejoicing does not last and its afflictions cannot be avoided.

It is deceitful, harmful, changing, perishable, exhaustible, liable to destruction, eating away, and destructive. When it reaches the extremity of desires of those who incline towards it and feel happy with it, the position is just what Allah the Glorified says in the Quran:

''Like the water which We send down from heaven, and the herbage of the earth mingles with it, then it becomes dry stubble which the winds scatter; for Allah over all things hath power. (18:45)'

No person wins rejoicing from this world but tears come to him after it, and no one has its comforts in the front but he has to face hardships in the rear. No one receives the light rain of ease in it but the heavy rain of distress pours upon him. It is just worthy of this world that in the morning, it supports a man, but in the evening, it does not recognize him. If one side of it is sweet and pleasant, the other side is bitter and distressing.

No one secures enjoyment from its freshness but he has to face hardship from its calamities. No one would pass the evening under the wing of safety but that his morning would be under the feathers of the wing-tip of fear. It is deceitful, and all that is there in it is deception. It is perishable and all that is on it is to perish.

There is no good in its provisions except in piety. Whoever takes little from it, collects much of what would give him safety, while one who takes much from it takes much of what would ruin him. He would shortly depart from his collection. How many people relied on it but it distressed them; (how many) felt peaceful with it but it tumbled them down; how many were prestigious but it made them low, and how many were proud but it made them disgraceful.

Its authority is changing. Its life is dirty. Its sweet water is bitter. Its sweetness is like myrrh. Its foods are poisons. Its means are weak. The living in it is exposed to death; the healthy in it is exposed to disease. Its realm is liable to be snatched away. The strong in it is liable to be defeated, and the rich is liable to be afflicted with misfortune. The neighbor in it is liable to be plundered.

Are you not residing in the houses of those before you, who were of longer ages, better traces, had bigger desires, more in numbers, and who had greater armies? How they devoted themselves to the world and how they showed preference to it! Then they left it without any provision that could convey them through, or the back of a beast for riding to carry them.

Did you hear the news that the world was ever generous enough to present ransom for them, or gave them any support or afforded them

good company? It rather inflicted them with troubles, made them languid with calamities, molested them with catastrophes, threw them down on their noses, trampled them under hoofs, and helped the vicissitudes of time against them. You have observed its strangeness towards those who went near it, acquired it, and appropriated it, until they depart from it for good.

Did it give them any provision other than starvation or make them stay in other than narrow places, or give them light other than gloom, or give them in the end anything other than repentance? Is this what you much ask for or remain satisfied with, or towards which you feel greedy? How bad this abode is for him who did not suspect it to be so and did not entertain fear from it!

You should know, as you do know, that you have to leave it and depart from it. While in it, take lesson from those 'who proclaimed: ***who is more powerful than we are? (41:15),'*** *but they were carried to their graves, though not as riders. They were then made to stay in the graves, but not as guests. Graves were made for them from the surface of the ground. Their shrouds were made from earth. Old bones were made their neighbor. They are neighbors who do not answer a caller nor ward off trouble, nor pay heed to a mourner.*

If they are rained, they do not feel happy, and if they face famine, they do not feel disappointed. They are together but each one apart. They are close together but they do not see each other. They are near but they do not meet. They are enduring and they have no hatred. They are ignorant and their malice has died away. There is no fear of trouble from them and no hope of their warding off troubles.

They have exchanged the back surface of the earth with its stomach (interior), vastness with narrowness, family with loneliness, and light with darkness. They have come to it (i.e. this world) as they had left it with bare feet and naked bodies. They departed from it with their acts towards the continuing life and everlasting house, as Allah has said,

'As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it. (It is) a promise (binding) upon Us. Lo! We are to perform it. (21:104)

Surah Al-Hajj

Exegesis Of Verse No. 17

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! Those who believe (this revelation), and those who are Jews, and the Sabaeans, and the Christians, and the Magians, and the idolaters - Lo! Allah will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection. Lo! Allah is Witness over all things. (22:17)

It is reported that Imam Ali ('a), from the minbar, once said to the attendants, *Ask me before you lose me.*

Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays thus asked, 'Why are the Magians subjected to the jizyah tax when no book from the heavens was revealed to them and no prophet was sent to them?'

Answering him, Imam Ali ('a) said,

Yes, it is, O Ash'ath. Allah revealed to them a book and sent to them a prophet. One night, their king was drunk when he summoned his daughter and committed incest with her. The next morning when they heard about this incident, the people gathered at the door of the king's palace and said, 'O king, you have profaned our religion, causing it extermination. So, come out so that we will purify you and subject you to punishment.'

However, the king answered, 'Come you all before me and listen to my justification. If it gives me a way out from what I have perpetrated, then accept it; otherwise, you may do to me whatever you want.' When they all came together, the king asked, 'Do you know that Allah has not created any being more honorable than our father Adam and our mother Eve?' They all said, 'This is true, O king.' The king added, 'Is it not true that Adam gave his daughters in marriage to his sons?'

They all said, 'You are true. This is the true religion!' Thus, they all agreed to follow this act as part of the religion. Once they did so,

Almighty Allah erased knowledge from their minds and took off the book from them. They are thus disbelievers and they will go straightly to Hell-fire without being interrogated for their deeds. However, the hypocrites are worse than they are.' 193

Surah Al-Mu'minun

Exegesis Of Verse No. 2

The Holy Quran reads,

(It is they) Who are humble in their prayers. (23:2)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have explained humbleness in prayers that a performer of a prayer should not turn his face to other sides.194

Exegesis Of Verse No. 3

The Holy Quran reads,

And who shun vain conversation. (23:3)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Any speech that does not include a word of remembering Almighty Allah is considered vain conversation. 195

Exegesis Of Verse No. 14

The Holy Quran reads,

Then fashioned We the drop a clot, then fashioned We the clot a little lump, then fashioned We the little lump bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, and then produced it as another creation. So, blessed be Allah the Best of creators. (23:14)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

When the drop is four months old, Almighty Allah sends to it an angel to blow the soul in it in the threefold gloom. This is the meaning of His saying, 'Then We produced it as another creation,' which means the blowing of soul in it. 196

Exegesis Of Verse No. 30

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! Herein verily are portents, for lo! We are ever putting (mankind) to the test. (23:30)

In one of his sermons, Imam Ali ('a) says,

O people, look at the world like those who abstain from it, and turn away from it. By Allah, it would shortly turn out its inhabitants and cause grief to the happy and the safe. That which turns and goes away from it never returns and that which is likely to come about is not known or anticipated. Its joy is mingled with grief. Herein men's firmness inclines towards weakness and languidness. The majority of what pleases you here should not mislead you, because that which would help you would be little.

Allah may shower His mercy on him who ponders and takes lesson thereby, and when he takes lesson, he achieves enlightenment. Whatever is present in this world would shortly not exist, while whatever is to exist in the next world is already in existence. Every countable thing would pass away. Every anticipation should be taken to be coming up, and everything that is to come up should be taken as just near.

A true learned person is he who knows his worth. It is enough for a man to remain ignorant if he knows not his worth. Certainly, the most hated man with Allah is he whom Allah has left for his own self. He goes astray from the right path and moves without a guide. If he is called to the plantation of this world, he is active; but if he is called to the plantation of the next world, he is slow as though what he is active for is obligatory upon him whereas in whatever he is slow was not required of him.

There will be a time wherein only a sleeping (i.e. inactive) believer will be safe (such that) if he is present, he is not recognized, but if he is absent, he is not sought after. These are the lamps of guidance and banners of night journeys. They do not spread calumnies nor divulge secrets, nor slander. They are those for whom Allah will open the doors of His mercy and keep off from them the hardships of His chastisement.

O people, a time will come to you when Islam will be capsized as a pot is capsized with all its contents. O people, Allah has protected you from that which might be hard on you but He has not spared you from being put on trial. Allah the Most Sublime of all speakers has said,

'Lo! Herein verily are portents, for lo! We are ever putting (mankind) to the test. (23:30)' 197

Exegesis Of Verse No. 76

The Holy Quran reads,

Already have We grasped them with punishment, but they humble not themselves unto their Lord, nor do they pray. (23:76)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

These people did not behave modestly when they prayed Almighty Allah and did not submit themselves to Him. Had they submitted to Allah, He would have responded to their prayers. 198

Al-A•bagh ibn Nubatah reported Imam Ali ('a) as saying,

The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

'To raise the hands in prayers is sort of istikanah (humbleness).'

When I asked him about the meaning of istikanah , the Messenger of Allah (S) referred me to this holy verse:

"but they humble not themselves unto their Lord, nor do they pray. (23:76)" 199

Surah Al-Nur

Exegesis Of Verse No. 30

The Holy Quran reads,

Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be modest. That is purer for them. Lo! Allah is aware of what they do. (24:30)

Reporting the reason for the revelation of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

A young man from the Ansar saw a woman in Al-Madinah and kept gazing at her, because women at that time used to put their veil behind their ears. When she passed by him, he kept looking at her until he entered an alley and had to hit against a wall in which there was a piece of bone (or a piece of glass) that tore his face. When the woman went away, he noticed that blood was flowing on his dress and chest. He then came to the Messenger of Allah (S) and told him of the event. Hence, Archangel Gabriel descended to the Messenger of Allah (S) carrying the holy verse (involved). 200

Exegesis Of Verse No. 37

The Holy Quran reads,

Men whom neither merchandise nor sale beguiles from remembrance of Allah and constancy in prayer and paying to the poor their due; who fear a day when hearts and eyeballs will be overturned. (24:37)

Whenever he recited this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) used to say afterwards,

Certainly, Allah the Glorified and Sublime has made His remembrance the light for hearts, which hear with its help despite deafness, see with its help despite blindness, and become submissive with its help despite unruliness.

In all the periods and times, when there were no prophets, there have been persons with whom Allah precious are His bounties whispered through their wits and spoke through their minds. With the help of the bright awakening of their ears, eyes, and hearts, they keep reminding others of the remembrance of the days of Allah and making others feel fear for Him like guide-points in wildernesses.

Whoever adopts the middle way, they praise his ways and give him the tidings of deliverance, but whoever goes right and left, they vilify his ways and frighten him with ruin. In this way, they served as lamps in these darkness and guides through these doubts.

There are some people devoted to the remembrance of Allah who have adopted it in place of worldly matters so that commerce or trade does not turn them away from it. They pass their life in it. They speak into the ears of neglectful persons warning against matters held unlawful by Allah, they order them to practice justice and themselves keep practicing it, and they refrain them from the unlawful and themselves refrain from it. It is as though they have finished the journey of this world towards the next world and have beheld what lies beyond it.

Consequently, they have become acquainted with all that befell them in the interstice during their long stay therein, and the Day of Judgment fulfils its promises for them. Therefore, they removed the curtain from these things for the people of the world, until it was as though they were seeing what people did not see and were hearing what people did not hear.

If you picture them in your mind in their admirable positions and well-known sittings, when they have opened the records of their actions and are prepared to render an account of themselves in respect of the small as well as the big things they were ordered to do but they failed to do, or were ordered to refrain from but they indulged therein, and they realized

the weight of their burden of bad acts on their backs, and they felt too weak to bear them, then they wept bitterly and spoke to each other while still crying and bewailing to Allah in repentance and acknowledgement of their shortcomings, you would find them to be emblems of guidance and lamps in darkness, angels would be surrounding them, peace would be descending upon them, the doors of the sky would be opened for them, and positions of honor would be assigned to them in the place of which Allah had informed them.

Therefore, He has appreciated their actions and praised their position. They call Him and breathe in the air of forgiveness, they are ever needy of His bounty and they remain humble before His greatness, the length of their grief has pained their hearts, and the length of weeping their eves. They knock at every door of inclination towards Allah. They ask Him Whose generosity does not make destitute and from Whom those who approach Him do not get disappointed.

Therefore, take account of yourself for your own sake because the account of others will be taken by one other than you. 201

Exegesis Of Verse No. 39

The Holy Quran reads,

As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage in a desert. The thirsty one supposes it to be water until he comes unto it and finds it naught, and finds, in the place thereof, Allah Who pays him his due; and Allah is swift at reckoning. (24:39)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have been asked as to how Almighty Allah reckons all people at the same time. He ('a) answered,

He does so as same as he provides them all with sustenance at the same time. 202

Exegesis Of Verse No. 43

The Holy Quran says,

Have you not seen how Allah wafts the clouds, then gathers them, then makes them layers, and you see the rain come forth from between them; He sends down from the heaven mountains wherein is hail, and smites there with whom He wills, and averts it from whom He wills. The flashing of His lightning all but snatches away the sight. (24:43)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) quotes the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Allah the Almighty and All-majestic has made clouds to act as sieve for the rain. Clouds melt snow to change it into water so that it will not harm those on which (or whom) it comes down. However, the injuries caused by snow and thunderbolts are the chastisement of Allah the Almighty and All- majestic that He smites with whom He wills from among His servants. 203

Surah Al-Furqan

Exegesis Of Verse No. 24

The Holy Quran reads,

Those who have earned Paradise on that day will be better in their home and happier in their place of resting. (25:24)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

On the last day of a son of Adam's (i.e. human being) life in this world and his first day in the other world, his wealth, sons, and deed are put before his eyes in a human form. He will then turn his face toward his wealth and says, 'By Allah, I have been extremely caring for you and I have been too stingy to spend you. What will you, on this day, give me in return?' The wealth will say, 'You may take your shroud from me!'

He then turns his face toward his sons and says, 'By Allah, I have loved you very much and I have protected you as much as I could. What do you have with you for me on this day?' They will answer, 'We will escort

you to your hole where we will bury you.' He then turns his face toward his deed and says, 'By Allah, I have neglected you and you have been very burdensome to me to do. Now, what do you have for me?' His deed will answer, 'I will be your comrade in your grave and during your resurrection until you and I will be stopped before your Lord.'

If that person is a friend of Allah, he will be received by one whose scent is the most pleasant, whose looking is the most handsome, and whose dress is the most beautiful. He will say to him, 'Have these good tidings! You will enjoy rest, bounty, and a garden of bliss. Your coming is the best.' The person will ask, 'Who are you?' He will be answered, 'I am your righteous deed. Move from this world to Paradise.' In fact, the righteous deed knows the person who performs the ritual bathing for the dead body and knows those who carry him to his grave. He thus encourages them to hurry up.

In the grave, the two interrogating angels of the grave, with such long hair that they pull after them and such heavy paces that shake the ground under their feet, will appear before him. With voices that are as earsplitting as thunder and with eyes that are as glowing as lightning, they will ask, 'Who is your lord? What is your religion? Who is your prophet?' The person will answer, 'My lord is Allah, my religion is Islam, and my prophet is Muhammad (S).' They will then say to him, 'May Allah confirm you with what pleases and satisfies you!' This is the meaning of Almighty Allah's saying:

'Allah confirms those who believe by a firm saying in the life of the world and in the Hereafter. (14:27)'

The two angels will then open in his grave a place that is as spacious as his sight can take, and open before him a door that leads to Paradise. They will then say to him, 'Sleep with tranquility and peace just like the sleeping of a fortunate young man, for Allah the Almighty and All-majestic says,

'Those who have earned Paradise on that day will be better in their home and happier in their place of resting. (25:24)' 204

Exegesis Of Verse No. 38

The Holy Quran reads,

And (the tribes of) 'Ad and Thamud, and the dwellers in Al-Rass, and many generations in between. (25:38)

The following narration about the story of the dwellers of Al-Rass is quoted from Shaykh Al-Saduq's 'Uyun Akhbar Al-Ridha:

A noble man from the tribe of Tamim, named 'Amr, went to see Imam Ali ('a) three days before he was martyred. In the presence of the Imam ('a), he asked, 'O Leader of the Believers, please inform me about the People of the Ditch; at what time they lived, where their houses were, who their king was, whether Almighty Allah sent a prophet to them or not, and how they were destroyed, because they are mentioned in the Quran without any details.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

You have asked me about an issue that no one else had asked me about before. No one will be able to tell you anything about it after me unless he will quote me. There are no verses in the Book of Almighty Allah that I do not know. I also know the interpretation of all these verses. I know where they have been revealed on a mountain or in a valley. I know at what time they have been revealed: at night or in daytime.

At this point, Imam Ali ('a) pointed at his chest and said,

Here is a lot of knowledge. However, very few are those who seek it. Soon will they be sorry when they lose me.

The Imam ('a) continued,

O brother from the Tamim tribe, this is their account: They were a tribe that worshipped a pine tree, which they called Shah Derakht. Japheth the son of Prophet Noah had planted it beside a spring called Dushab. This spring had gushed out for Prophet Noah after the Flood. These people

were called the People of the Ditch (Al-Rass) because they dug their homes out of the ground.

They lived in the era that followed the passing away of Prophet Solomon the son of Prophet David. They had twelve towns next to a river from the eastern lands called Rass. The river was afterwards known as Al-Rass. At that time, there were no other rivers on the earth so overflowing with such delicious water. There were also no towns more urbanized than they were. The twelve towns were called Aban, Adhar , Day , Bahman , Isfandar , Farwardin , Urdibehesht , Khurdad , Murdad , Tir , Mehr , and Shahriwar.

The largest of the towns was Isfandar in which their king lived. His name was Tarkudh the son of Ghabur the son of Yarish the son of Sazan the son of Nimrod 205 *who was the archenemy of Prophet Abraham. The spring and the pine tree were located in this town. They had planted one of the seeds of that pine tree in each town. The seeds grew into large trees. They had made it forbidden to use the water from the spring and the rivers. Neither the animals nor the people were allowed to drink from that water. They would kill anyone who violated this order. They said, 'This water is the source of life of our gods. It is not allowable for anyone to reduce their lifespan.'*

They themselves and their animals used to drink from River Al-Rass along which the towns were built. They had set up celebrations in each town every month of the year. The people of the town would gather around the large pine tree in their own and set up a large silk tent that was full of colorful designs around the pine tree. Then, they would bring sheep and cows and offer them for sacrifice to that tree.

Then, they would pile up wood on the animals that they had slaughtered and set them on fire. Once the smoke from the fire filled up the air and blocked off the sky from their view, they would then fall in prostration before the tree. They would cry to please the tree. Satan would also come and shake the tree and yell from the trunk of the tree like a child, saying, 'O my servants! I am pleased with you. Be happy and blessed.' Then, they would raise their heads from prostration. They drank wine and

played music with cymbals. They would spend the whole day and night this way and then leave.

The Persians adopted the names of those towns for their months, since the people of those towns used to say that this was the day of celebration for that month. On the day of celebration, all people in the largest village, both young and old, gathered together in the town and set up a silver tent full of colorful designs near the spring and the pine tree. The tent had twelve entrances; each entrance was assigned to the people of one of the towns.

They would make prostrations to the pine tree in front of the tent and sacrifice many more animals than they did for the pine tree in the smaller villages. Satan would come to that tree and shake the pine very hard. He would talk loudly from within the tree and promise them a lot of fake promises much more than all the other devils did. The people would raise their heads from prostration and pass out due to extreme happiness and pleasure. They could not talk since they drank too much and listened to too much music. They would spend twelve days and nights as many days as they had celebrations during the year celebrating that way. Then, they would leave.

When disbelief in Almighty Allah and worship of false deities spread amongst them, Almighty Allah sent them a prophet from the children of Israel one of the sons of Judah the son of Jacob (i.e. Israel). He lived among them for a very long time and invited them to recognize the Almighty Allah and to worship Him as the one and only god. However, they did not obey him.

When he realized that they were at a great loss and they rejected his invitation to development and progress, he attended the celebrations held in the biggest town and said, 'O God, these servants of You do nothing but denying me and rejecting You. They worship a tree that neither harms them nor has any benefits. Please, dry up all the trees and show them Your power and grandeur.' The next morning, all the trees withered. People were scared at this and they felt hopeless and powerless. They then divided into two groups.

One group said, 'This man who claims to be the messenger of the Lord of the heavens and the earth has bewitched your gods in order to redirect your attention from our gods to his God.' The other group said, 'No! Your gods have seen this man find faults with them and say irrelevant things about them. They have become angry since he invites you to his God. Thus, the gods have covered up the beauty of the trees from you so that you would be angry and take their revenge against this man.'

Therefore, they all decided to kill him. They brought long, big, lead pipes and mounted them one on top of another from the depth of the spring up to the surface of water. Then, they emptied the water in them and dug a deep well in the bottom of the pipes with a narrow opening on top. They threw their prophet in the well, put a big rock on top of the well, and removed the pipes. They said, 'Now, our gods saw that we killed the person who talked ill about them and prevented us from worshipping them.

They saw that we buried him under the greatest god so that the greatest god would be pleased. We hope that our gods have become happy with us now, and the blossoms and the freshness return to us like before.' The people could hear their prophet moaning the whole day and saying, 'O God, You see the tightness of this place and the extent of my discomfort. Have mercy on my weakness and my losing any way out. Please, rush to take my life. Do not delay Your response to my prayer.'

The prophet finally died. Almighty Allah asked Gabriel, 'Can these servants who have been fooled by My tolerance imagine that they are secure from My wrath having killed My prophet and worshipped gods other than Me? How can they imagine that they can withstand My wrath and depart from the domain of My reign? I take revenge against whoever disobeys Me and does not fear My chastisement. I have sworn by My majesty and honor that I will establish them as lessons for the people of the world to take heed of.'

Almighty Allah first scared them with red winds and they were wandering about the storm. As they were scared, they sought refuge in each other. However, the ground turned into blazing sulfur under their feet and a black cloud overshadowed them and dropped a molten dome like fire over them. Their bodies melted in fire like lead.

We take refuge in Almighty Allah from His wrath and chastisement. There is neither might nor power except with Allah the All-high and All-great. 206

Surah Al-Qasas

Exegesis Of Verse No. 5

The Holy Quran reads,

And We desired to show favor unto those who were oppressed in the earth and to make them examples and to make them the inheritors. (28:5)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

The world shall bend towards us after having been refractory as the biting she-camel bends towards its young.

The Imam ('a) then recited the holy verse involved.207

Exegesis Of Verse No. 77

The Holy Quran reads,

Seek the abode of the Hereafter in that which Allah has given you and neglect not your portion of the world, and be you kind even as Allah has been kind to you, and seek not corruption in the earth; lo! Allah loves not corrupters. (28:77)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have explained this holy verse as follows:

It means: Do not neglect making use of your health, strength, spare time, youth, and activity in seeking for the Hereafter. 208

Exegesis Of Verse No. 83

The Holy Quran reads,

As for that Abode of the Hereafter, We assign it unto those who seek not oppression in the earth, nor yet corruption. The sequel is for those who ward off evil. (28:83)

It is reported that Imam Ali (‘a), during the days of his caliphate, used to walk in marketplaces to guide the lost, help the weak, and recite the holy verse involved before the sellers and grocers. He would say after that,

This holy verse was revealed to express the manners of the just and modest rulers and the powerful people. 209

Exegesis Of Verse No. 88

The Holy Quran reads,

And call not with Allah any other god. There is no god but He. Everything is perishable but His Face. His is the judgment and to Him you shall be brought back. (28:88)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

The meaning is that everything will perish except the religion of Allah, because it is impossible that all parts of Him should be perishable except for the face. Almighty Allah is too majestic and too great to be so. What perishes is what is not part of Him. Consider His saying,

‘Everyone on it must pass away and there will endure forever the Face of your Lord; the Lord of glory and honor. (55:26-7)’ 210

Surah Al-’Ankabut

Exegesis Of Verse No. 2

The Holy Quran reads,

Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, 'We believe,' and not be tried? (29:2)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

When Allah the Glorified sent down this verse: Alif lam mim. Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, 'We believe,' and not be tried?' I came to know that the disturbance would not befall us so long as the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his progeny) is among us. So, I said, 'O Prophet of Allah, what is this disturbance of which Allah the Sublime has informed you?' He replied, 'O Ali, my people will be tried after me.' 211

Exegesis Of Verse No. 5

The Holy Quran reads,

Whoever hopes to meet Allah, the term appointed by Allah will then most surely come; and He is the Hearing, the Knowing. (29:5)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said, He who believes that he will be resurrected, then the promise of Allah to award some people and punish others will certainly come. Hence, 'meeting Allah' mentioned in this verse stands for the resurrection, but not for seeing Him. 212

Surah Al-Rum

Exegesis Of Verse No. 39

The Holy Quran reads,

And whatever you lay out as usury so that it may increase in the property of men, it shall not increase with Allah; and whatever you give in charity, desiring Allah's pleasure, it is these (persons) that shall get manifold. (30:39)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Allah has laid down faith for purification from polytheism, prayer for purification from vanity; levy (zakat) as a means of livelihood, fasting as a trial of the people, ritual pilgrimage (aajj) as a support for religion, jihad (fighting in the way of Allah) for the honor of Islam, enjoining the right (Al-amr bi'l-ma 'ruf) for the good of the common people, forbidding from the wrong (Al-nahy 'an Al-munkar) for the control of the mischievous, regard for kinship for increase of number, revenge for stoppage of bloodshed, the award of penalties for the realization of the importance of the prohibitions, the abstinence from drinking wine for protection of the wit, avoidance of theft for inculcating chastity, abstinence from adultery for safeguarding descent, abstinence from sodomy for increase of progeny, tendering evidence for furnishing proof against contentions, abstinence from telling lies for increasing esteem for truth, maintenance of peace for protection from danger, the Divinely ordained leadership (Imamate) for the orderliness of the community, and obedience to the Imams as a mark of respect to Imamate. 213

Surah Luqman

Exegesis Of Verse No. 34

The Holy Quran reads,

Surely, Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the hour (of Resurrection), and He sends down the rain, and He knows what is in the wombs, and no one knows what he shall earn on the morrow, and no one knows in what land he shall die. Surely, Allah is Knowing, Aware. (31:34)

Imam Ali ('a) has specified the knowledge of the unseen ('ilm Al-ghayb) with these five matters. Hence, none can have knowledge of any of these matters except Almighty Allah Who alone knows the unseen.

Surah Al-Ahzab

Exegesis Of Verse No. 41

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, remember Allah with much remembrance. (33:41)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

He who remembers Allah in secret has in fact remembered Him much remembrance. The hypocrites remember Allah in the public but they never remember him in secret. Therefore, Allah the Almighty and All-majestic describes them as: ' ***Lo! The hypocrites seek to beguile Allah, but it is He Who beguiles them. When they stand up to worship, they perform it languidly and to be seen of men. They do not remember Allah little. (4:142)*** *'* 214

Exegesis Of Verse No. 56

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe, ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation. (33:56)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Always invoke Allah's blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad and his Household, because Allah the All-exalted will then admit your prayers when you mention him, invoke Allah's blessings on him, and persevere in remembering him. Whenever you recite this verse:

'Lo! Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet,'

you may invoke Allah's blessings upon the Prophet whether you were engaged in a ritual prayer or in any other action. 215

Exegesis Of Verse No. 72

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it. Lo! He has proved a tyrant and a fool. (33:72)

About the significance of the trust, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Then, as regards fulfillment of trust, whoever does not pay attention to it will be disappointed. It was placed before the strong skies, vast layers of the earth, and high mountains, but none of them was found to be stronger, vaster, or higher than it. If anything could be unapproachable because of height, vastness, power, or strength, they would have been unapproachable, but they felt afraid of the evil consequences (of failure in fulfilling a trust) and noticed what a weaker being did not realize it, and this was man: 'Lo! He has proved a tyrant and a fool.' 216

Surah Saba'

Exegesis Of Verse No. 37

The Holy Quran reads,

And it is not your wealth nor your children that will bring you near unto Us, but he who believes and does good deeds, (he draws near). As for such, theirs will be having twofold reward for what they did and they will dwell secure in lofty halls. (34:37)

Explaining the twofold reward, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

On the Resurrection Day, Almighty Allah will count their rewardable deeds and will give them ten to seven hundred folds for each single rewardable act. Allah the Almighty and All-majestic says, 'A reward from your Lord, a gift according to a reckoning. (78/36)' He also says, 'As for such, theirs will be having twofold reward for what they did and they will dwell secure in lofty halls.' 217

Exegesis Of Verse No. 39

The Holy Quran reads,

Say: Surely, my Lord amplifies the means of subsistence for whom He pleases of His servants and straitens them for whom He pleases, and whatever thing you spend, He replaces it, and He is the best of sustainers. (34:39)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying,

Every day has ill omen; so, ward off the ill omen of that day with alms that you give.

Imam Ali (‘a) then said,

Recite the pieces in which the replacement of spending is mentioned, for I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, ‘’Whatever thing you spend, He replaces it.’ If you do not spend, how will He replace it?’ 218

Surah Fatir

Exegesis Of Verse No. 1

The Holy Quran reads,

All praise is due to Allah the Originator of the heavens and the earth, the Maker of the angels messengers flying on wings; two, three, and four. He increases in creation what He pleases. Surely, Allah has power over all things. (35:1)

Describing the creation of the angels, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

(O Allah,) You have created angels and lodged them Your heavens. They are never lazy, nor inadvertent, nor disobedient to You. They are the most knowledgeable of all of Your creatures with You, the most fearful of all of Your creatures from You, the closest of all of Your creatures to

You, and the most versed in obedience to You. They are overcome by neither sleep of eyes, nor inattentiveness of intellects, nor fatigue of bodies.

They did not reside in the backbones of men and they were not included in the wombs of women and You did not create them from despised fluid. You fashioned them in such fashioning that befits them to inhabit Your skies, conferred upon them the honor of being in Your vicinity, entrusted them with Your revelations, guarded them against maladies, protected them against ordeals, and purified them from sinning. Were it not for Your power, they would not be powerful. Were it not for Your fixing, they would not be fixed. Were it not for Your mercy, they would not obey You. Were it not for You, they would not exist. Behold!

Despite their high position in Your sight, their obedience to You, standing with You, and lack of inadvertence of Your orders, if they could realize Your affairs that are hidden from them, they would despise all their deeds towards You, they would disparage themselves, and they would discover for sure that they had never served You as You should be served. Glory be to You; You are the Creator and the Worshipped. How excellent Your deeds to Your creatures are! 219

Surah Yasin

Exegesis Of Verse No. 12

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! We it is Who bring the dead to life. We record that which they send before them, and their footprints. And all things We have kept in a clear Register. (36:12)

Praising Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

Ali is verily the Clear Register (i.e. Imam) in whom Allah the All-blessed and All-exalted has kept the knowledge of all things. 220

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

By Allah, I am the Clear Imam; I clarify the truth against the falsehood. I have inherited this capability from the Messenger of Allah (S). 221

Exegesis Of Verse No. 65

The Holy Quran reads,

This day, We seal up their mouths, and their hands speak out to Us, and their feet bear witness as to what they used to earn. (36:65)

Describing the horror of the Resurrection Day, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Allah the All-blessed and All-exalted will then seal up their months and make the hands, legs, and skins speak up. So, they will testify to each and every act of disobedience they have committed. Then, Allah will remove the sealing from their mouths, and they will ask their skins, 'Why have you testified against us?' 222

Exegesis Of Verse No. 70

The Holy Quran reads,

(so as) to warn whosoever lives, and that the word may be fulfilled against the disbelievers. (36:70)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

By 'whosoever lives,' it is meant the people of reason. 223

Exegesis Of Verse No. 82

The Holy Quran reads,

His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it, 'Be!' So, it comes to be . (36:82)

Imam Ali ('a), in one of his most brilliant sermons, says,

He who assigns to Him (i.e. Almighty Allah) different conditions does not believe in His oneness, nor does he who likens Him grasp His reality. He who illustrates Him does not signify Him. He who points at Him and imagines Him does not mean Him.

Everything that is known through itself has been created, and everything that exists by virtue of other things is the effect of a cause. He works but not with the help of instruments. He fixes measures but not with the activity of thinking. He is rich but not by acquisition.

Times do not keep company with Him, and implements do not help Him. His Being precedes times. His Existence precedes nonexistence, and His eternity precedes beginning. By His creating the senses, it is known that He has no senses. By the contraries in various matters, it is known that He has no contrary.

By the similarity between things, it is known that there is nothing similar to Him. He has made light the contrary of darkness, brightness the contrary of gloom, dryness the contrary of moisture, and heat the contrary of cold. He produces affection among inimical things.

He fuses together diverse things, brings near remote things, and separates things, which are joined together. He is not confined by limits nor counted by numbers. Material parts can surround things of their own kind, and organs can point out things similar to themselves. The word 'mudhu (since)' disproves their eternity, the word 'qad (that denotes nearness of time of occurrence)' disproves their being from ever, and the word 'lawla (if it were not)' keeps them remote from perfection.

Through them, the Creator manifests Himself to the intelligence, and through them, He is guarded from the sight of the eyes.

Stillness and motion do not occur in Him, and how can that thing occur in Him, which He has Himself made to occur? And how can a thing revert to Him, which He first created? And how can a thing appear in Him, which He first brought to appearance? If it had not been so, His Self would have become subject to diversity, His Being would have be-

come divisible into parts, and His reality would have been prevented from being deemed eternal.

If there had been a front to Him, there would have been a rear also for Him. He would need completing only if shortage befell Him. In that case, signs of the created would appear in Him, and He would become a sign leading to other objects instead of signs leading to Him. Through the might of His abstention from affectedness, He is far above being affected by things, which affect others.

He is that which does not change or vanish. The process of setting does not behove Him. He has not begotten any one lest He be regarded as having been born. He has not been begotten otherwise He would be contained within limits. He is too High to have sons. He is too purified to contact women. Imagination cannot reach Him so as to assign Him quantity.

Understanding cannot think of Him so as to give him shape. Senses do not perceive Him so as to feel Him. Hands cannot touch Him so as to rub against Him. He does not change into any condition. He does not pass from one state to another. Nights and days do not turn Him old. Light and darkness do not alter Him.

It cannot be said that He has a limit or extremity, or end or termination; nor do things control Him so as to raise Him or lower Him, nor does anything carry Him so as to bend Him or keep Him erect. He is not inside things nor outside them. He conveys news, but not with the tongue or voice. He listens, but not with the holes of the ears or the organs of hearing.

He says, but does not utter words. He remembers, but does not memorize. He determines, but not by exercising His mind. He loves and approves without any sentimentality of heart. He hates and feels angry without any painstaking. When He intends to create someone, He says, 'Be!' and there he is, but not through a voice that strikes the ears. His speech is an act of His creation. His like never existed before this. If there had been eternity to precede His existence, it would have been the second god.

It cannot be said that He came into being after He had not been in existence, because in that case, the attributes of the created things would be assigned to Him and there would remain no difference between them and Him, and He would have no distinction over them.

Thus, the Creator and the created would become equal and the initiator and the initiated would be on the same level. He created the whole of creation without any example made by someone else, and He did not secure the assistance of any one out of His creation for creating it.

He created the earth and suspended it without being busy, retained it without support, made it stand without legs, raised it without pillars, protected it against bendings and curvings, and defended it against crumbling and splitting into parts. He fixed mountains on it like stumps, solidified its rocks, caused its streams to flow, and opened wide its valleys. Whatever He made did not suffer from any flaw, and whatever He strengthened did not show any weakness.

He manifests Himself over the earth with His authority and greatness. He is aware of its inside through His knowledge and understanding. He has power over every thing in the earth by virtue of His sublimity and almightiness. Nothing from the earth, which He may ask for, defies Him, nor does it oppose Him so as to overpower Him.

No swift-footed creature can run away from Him so as to surpass Him. He is not needy towards any possessing person so that he should feed Him. All things bow to Him and all things are humble before His greatness. They cannot flee away from His authority to someone else in order to escape His benefit or His harm. There is no parallel for Him who may match Him and no one like Him so as to equal Him.

He will destroy the earth after its existence until all that which exists on it will become nonexistent. But the extinction of the world after its creation is not stranger than its first formation and invention. How could it be? Even if all the animals of the earth, whether birds or beasts, stabled cattle or pasturing ones, of different origins and species, dull people and sagacious men if all these jointly try to create even a mosquito, they are

not able to bring it into being and they do not understand what the way to its creation is.

Their wits are bewildered and wandering. Their powers fall short and fail, and return disappointed and tired, knowing that they are defeated and admitting their inability to produce it, also realizing that they are too weak even to destroy it. 224

Surah Al-Saffat

Exegesis of Verse No. 6

The Holy Quran reads,

Surely, We have adorned the nearest heaven with an adornment; the stars. (37:6)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Verily, these stars that are in the sky are cities just like the cities that are on the earth. 225

Exegesis of Verse No. 24

The Holy Quran reads,

And stop them, for they shall be questioned. (37:24)

Explaining this holy verse, Abu-Sa'id Al-Khidri is reported to have said that the servants of Allah should be questioned about the divinely ordained loyalty to Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.226

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

The two feet of any servant (of Allah) shall not be allowed to make any move before the servant will be questioned about four matters; how he

spent his lifetime, what he used his youth for, how he earned his income and how he spent it, and how he loved us the Ahl Al-Bayt. 227

Exegesis of Verse No. 99

The Holy Quran reads,

And he (Abraham) said, 'Surely, I fly to my lord. He will guide me.' (37:99)

Imam Ali ('a), answering a man who asked him about some allegorical Quranic verses, said,

I have already informed you that the interpretation of some pieces of the Book of Allah the Almighty and All-majestic can be different from their revelation, which is different from the speech of human beings. I will now cite some examples for you so that you will be sufficiently convinced, if Allah wills.

One example is the saying of Abraham, 'Surely, I fly to my lord. He will guide me.' Abraham's flight to his Lord stands for his turning to Him in devotional acts, his painstaking efforts that are purposed purely for the Lord's sake, and his seeking nearness to Him. As you see, the interpretation of this verse is different from its revelation (i.e. the external meaning). 228

Exegesis of Verse No. 130

The Holy Quran reads,

Peace be unto Il-Yasin. (37:130)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Yasin in Muhammad (S); and we are the family of Yasin. 229

Surah Sad

Exegesis of Verse No. 16

The Holy Quran reads,

They say, 'Our Lord! Hasten on for us our fate before the Day of Reckoning.' (38:16)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

The word 'qitt (fate)' means the share of chastisement. 230

Exegesis of Verse No. 32

The Holy Quran reads,

And he said, 'Lo! I have preferred the good things to the remembrance of my Lord until they were taken out of sight behind the curtain. (38:32)

Abdullah ibn 'Abbas is reported to have asked Imam Ali ('a) about the meaning of this holy verse, and the Imam ('a) first asked him,

What is the explanation of this verse that you have received?

Abdullah ibn 'Abbas said, 'I heard Ka'b saying: Prophet Solomon was engaged in the horses that were shown before him until he missed performing the prayer. He thus said, 'Bring them (i.e. the horses) back to me.' He thus ordered these horses, which were fourteen, to be beheaded by sword. He therefore killed them all. As a punishment, Allah divested him of his kingdom for fourteen days because he had wronged these horses when he killed them.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

Liar is Ka'b! The truth is that Prophet Solomon, one day, engaged himself in checking the horses which he had intended to use in fighting against the enemy until the sun took out of sight behind the horizon.

When he took notice of so, he said on account of the command of Allah the All-exalted to the angels who are entrusted with the sun, 'Bring the sun back to me.' So, the sun was brought back to him and he could perform the Afternoon Prayer. Indeed, the prophets of Allah never commit any wrongdoing and never order of any wrongdoing, because they are safeguarded and purified against wrongdoing. 231

Exegesis of Verses No. 71 and 72

The Holy Quran reads,

When your Lord said unto the angels, 'Lo! I am about to create a mortal out of mire. And when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My Spirit, then fall down before him prostrate. (38:71-2)

About the disdain or refusal of Satan to prostrate himself before Adam on the command of Almighty Allah, Imam Ali ('a) says in one of his speeches,

Praise be to Allah Who wears the apparel of honor and dignity and has chosen them for Himself instead of for His creation. He has made them inaccessible and unlawful for others. He has selected them for His own great Self, and has hurled a curse on him who contests with Him concerning them.

Then, He put His angels on trial concerning these attributes in order to distinguish those who are modest from those who are vain. Therefore, Allah, Who is aware of whatever is hidden in the hearts and whatever lies behind the unseen said, ''Verily, I am about to create man from clay. And when I have completed and have breathed into him of My spirit, then fall you prostrating in obeisance unto him.' And did fall prostrating in obeisance the angels all together save Iblis.'

His vanity stood in his way. Consequently, he felt proud over Adam by virtue of his creation and boasted over him on account of his origin. Thus, this enemy of Allah is the leader of those who boast, and the forerunner of the vain. It is he who laid the foundation of factionalism, quar-

reled with Allah about the robe of greatness, put on the dress of haughtiness, and took off the covering of humility.

Do you not see how Allah made him low on account of his vanity and humiliated him for his feigning to be high? He discarded him in this world and provided for him burning fire in the next world.

If Allah had wanted to create Adam from a light whose glare would have dazzled the eyes, whose handsomeness would have amazed the wits, and whose smell would have caught the breath, He could have done so; and if He had done so, people would have bowed to him in humility and the trial of the angels through him would have become easier.

But Allah the Glorified tries His creatures by means of those things whose real nature they do not know in order to distinguish good and bad for them through the trial, to remove vanity from them, and to keep them aloof from pride and self-admiration.

You should take a lesson from what Allah did with Satan; namely, He nullified his great acts and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, although Satan had worshipped Allah for six thousand years whether by the reckoning of this world or of the next world is not known.

Who now can remain safe from Allah after Satan by committing a similar disobedience? None at all. Allah the Glorified cannot let a human being enter Paradise if he does the same thing for which Allah turned out from it an angel. His command for the inhabitants in the sky and of the earth is the same. There is no friendship between Allah and any individual out of His creation so as to give him license for an undesirable thing, which He has held unlawful for all the worlds.

Therefore, you should fear lest Satan infects you with his disease, leads you astray through his call, or marches on you with his horsemen and footmen, because, by my life, he has put the arrow in the bow for you, has stretched the bow strongly, and has aimed at you from a nearby position, and: 'He (Satan) said, 'My Lord! Because You have left me to stray, cer-

tainly will I adorn unto them the path of error, and certainly will I cause them all to go astray.''

Although he (Satan) had said so only by guessing about the unknown future and by wrong conjecturing, the sons of vanity, the brothers of haughtiness, and the horsemen of pride and intolerance proved him to be true, so much so that when disobedient persons from among you bowed before him, and his greed about you gained strength; and what was a hidden secret turned into a clear fact, he spread his full control over you and marched with his forces towards you.

Then, they (Satan and his party) pushed you into the hollows of disgrace, threw you into the whirlpools of slaughter, and trampled you, wounding you by striking your eyes with spears, cutting your throats, tearing your nostrils, breaking your limbs, and taking you in ropes of control towards the fire already prepared. In this way, he became more harmful to your religion and a greater kindler of flames of mischief about your worldly matters than the enemies against whom you showed open opposition and against whom you marched your forces.

You should therefore spend all your force against him and all your efforts against him, because, by Allah, he boasted over your origin, questioned your position, and spoke lightly of your lineage. He advanced on you with his army and brought his footmen towards your path. They are chasing you from every place and they are hitting you at every finger joint. You are not able to defend by any means, nor can you repulse them by any determination. You are in the thick of disgrace, the ring of straitness, the field of death, and the way of distress.

You should therefore put out the fires of haughtiness and the flames of intolerance that are hidden in your hearts. This vanity can exist in a Muslim only by the machinations of Satan, his haughtiness, mischief, and whisperings. Make up your mind to have humility over your heads, to trample self-pride under your feet, and to cast off vanity from your necks. Adopt humility as the weapon between you and your enemy: Satan and his forces.

He certainly has, from every people, fighters, helpers, footmen, and horsemen. Do not be like him who feigned superiority over the son of his own mother without any distinction given to him by Allah except the feeling of envy, which his feeling of greatness created in him and the fire of anger that vanity kindled in his heart. Satan blew into his nose his own vanity, after which Allah gave him remorse and made him responsible for the sins of all killers up to the Day of Judgment.

Beware! You strove hard in revolting and created mischief on the earth in open opposition to Allah and in challenging the believers over fighting. You should fear Allah in feeling proud of your vanity and boasting over ignorance, because this is the root of enmity and the design of Satan wherewith he has been deceiving past people and bygone ages, with the result that they fell into the gloom of his ignorance and the hollows of his misguidance, submitting to his driving and accepting his leadership. In this matter, the hearts of all the people were similar, and centuries passed by, one after the other, in just the same way, and there was vanity with which chests were tightened. 232

Surah Al-Zumar

Exegesis of Verse No. 42

The Holy Quran reads,

Allah receives the souls at the time of their death, and that soul which dies not yet, (He receives it) in its sleep. He keeps that soul for which He has ordained death and dismisses the rest until an appointed term. Lo! Herein verily are portents for people who take thought. (39:42)

Imam Ali ('a), answering a man who asked him about some allegorical Quranic verses, said, Allah the Almighty says,

'Say, 'The angel of death, who has charge concerning you, will receive you.' (32:11)'

He also says,

'Allah receives the souls at the time of their death. (39:42)'

He also says,

'When death comes unto one of you, Our messengers receive him. (6:61)'

He also says,

'Whom the angels receive while they are wronging themselves' (16:28)

He also says,

'Those whom the angels receive when they are good' (16:32)'

Be it known to you that Allah the All-blessed and All-exalted manages the matter the way He wills and entrusts whomever of His creatures He wills with whatever matter He wills. As for the Angel of Death, Allah entrusts him with the elite creatures of Him as He wills. As for the messenger- angels, Allah entrust them with the elite creatures of Him as He wills.

A knowledgeable man cannot explain the entire knowledge of him, because there are among people those who are strong-minded and those who are feeble-minded. Besides, some aspects of knowledge can be bearably understood while other aspects cannot be understood unless Allah helps some people to understand them. He thus assists some of His elite creatures to bear these aspects of knowledge.

However, you are not required to know more than that Allah gives life and causes death and that He receives the souls at the hands of some of His creatures as He wills, be they angels or other categories of creatures. [233]

Exegesis of Verse No. 53

The Holy Quran reads,

Say, 'O My slaves who have been prodigal to their own hurt, despair not of the mercy of Allah, Who forgives all sins. Lo! He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.' (39:53)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

There is no verse in the Holy Quran more inclusive than this verse (i.e. the one involved). 234

Exegesis of Verse No. 73

The Holy Quran reads,

And those who keep their duty to their Lord are driven unto the Garden in troops; until when they reach it and the gates thereof are opened and the warders thereof say unto them, 'Peace be unto you! You are good; so, enter you (the Garden of delight) to dwell therein.' (39:73)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

There are eight gates of Paradise; from one gate will the prophets and the veracious servants enter therein, from another gate will the martyrs and the righteous enter therein, and from the other five gates will our devotees and our lovers enter therein. 235

Surah Ghafir

Exegesis of Verse No. 16

The Holy Quran reads,

The day when they come forth, nothing of them being hidden from Allah. 'Whose is the Sovereignty this day?' 'It is Allah's the One the Almighty.' (40:16)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Allah the Almighty and All-majestic will ask, 'Whose is the sovereignty this day?' He then makes the souls of the prophets, messengers, and argument-persons of Him to say, 'It is Allah's the One and Almighty.' Allah majestic be His majesty will then say, 'This day is each soul requited that which it has earned.' 236

In his discourse about the termination of this world, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Surely, after the extinction of the world, Allah the Glorified will remain alone with nothing else beside Him. He will be, after its extinction, as He was before its production: without time or place or moment or period. At this moment, period and time will not exist, and years and hours will disappear. There will be nothing except Allah the One and the All- powerful.

To Him is the return of all matters. Its initial creation was not in its power; and the prevention of its extinction was not in its power either. If it had had the power to prevent it, it would have existed forever. When He made anything of the world, the making of it did not cause Him any difficulty, and the creation of anything, which He created and formed, did not fatigue Him.

He did not create it to heighten His authority nor for fear of loss or harm, nor to seek its help against an overwhelming foe, nor to guard against any avenging opponent with its help, nor for the extension of His domain by its help, nor for boasting over largeness of His possession against a partner, nor because He felt lonely and desired to seek its company.

Then, after its creation, He will destroy it, but not because any worry has overcome Him neither in its upkeep and administration, nor for any pleasure that will accrue to Him, nor for the cumbrousness of anything over Him. The length of its life does not weary Him so as to induce Him to its quick destruction. But Allah the Glorified has maintained it with His kindness, kept it intact with His command, and perfected it with His power.

Then, after its destruction, He will resuscitate it, but not for any need of His Own towards it, nor to seek the assistance of any of its things against it, nor to change over from the condition of loneliness to that of company, nor from the condition of ignorance and blindness to that of knowledge and search, nor from paucity and need towards needlessness and plenty, nor from disgrace and lowliness towards honor and prestige. 237

Surah Fussilat

Exegesis of Verse No. 11

The Holy Quran reads,

Then turned He to the heaven when it was smoke, and said unto it and unto the earth, 'Come both of you willingly or loath.' They said, 'We come obedient.' (41:11)

About the creation of the heavens, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Among the proofs of His creation is the creation of the skies, which are fastened without pillars and stand without support. He called them and they responded obediently and humbly without being lazy or loathsome. If they had not acknowledged His Godhead and obeyed Him, He would not have made them the place for His throne, the abode of His angels, and the destination for the rising up of the pure utterances and the righteous deeds of the creatures. 238

Exegesis of Verse No. 22

The Holy Quran reads,

You did not hide yourselves lest your ears and your eyes and your skins should testify against you, but you deemed that Allah knew not much of what you did. (41:22)

In his famous instructive will to his son Muhammad, Imam Ali ('a) interpreted the 'skins' into 'private parts.'[239]

Exegesis of Verse No. 29

The Holy Quran reads,

And those who disbelieve will say, 'Our Lord! Show us those two who beguiled us of the jinn and humankind. We will place them underneath our feet that they may be among the nethermost.' (41:29)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have interpreted 'those two who beguiled us' into Iblis (Satan) and Cain the son of Adam, because Cain was the first human being to commit an act of disobedience to Almighty Allah on the earth.[240]

Surah Al-Shura

Exegesis of Verse No. 27

The Holy Quran reads,

And if Allah were to enlarge the provision for His slaves, they would surely rebel in the earth; but He sends down by measure as He wills. Lo! He is Informed, a Seer of His bondmen. (42:27)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that this holy verse was revealed to express the manners of the Ahl Al-Suffah (i.e. the homeless Muslims who used to sit against the wall of the Prophet's Mosque begging and receiving the alms of the wealthy Muslims) when they wished had they been granted worldly pleasures.[241]

Exegesis of Verse No. 30

The Holy Quran reads,

Whatever of misfortune strikes you, it is what your hands have earned. And He forgives much. (42:30)

Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah reported Imam Ali (‘a) to have said,

I am going to deliver a discourse that each Muslim individual is required to understand. Allah is too generous and glorious to punish anew His believing servant that He has punished in this world. Likewise, He is too generous and glorious to cancel the forgiveness that He provides for a believer in this world when He covers up his defect. Allah may strike a misfortune in the body, wealth, or family member. ‘Whatever of misfortune strikes you, it is what your hands have earned. And He forgives much.’ 242

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

The best verse in the Book of Allah is this one (i.e. the one involved). O Ali, any exposition to even a scratch of a piece of wood or a slip of a foot must have been because of a previously committed sin. Allah is too generous to cancel His pardon that He has given in this world. Likewise, Allah is too fair to punish again a servant of Him whom He has punished in this world. 243

Surah Al-Zukhruf

Exegesis of Verse No. 45

The Holy Quran reads,

And ask those of Our messengers whom We sent before you: Did We ever appoint gods to be worshipped beside the Beneficent? (43:45)

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

This saying of Allah the All-exalted is one of the open proofs that Allah has granted to our Prophet (S) one of the arguments that He has incum-

bently imposed on all of His creations. When Allah sealed the prophets with Prophet Muhammad (S) and chose him as His messenger to all nations and communities, He conferred upon him exclusively the honor of ascending to the heavens at that night of ascension.

On that occasion, Almighty Allah gathered all the prophets before him and he (i.e. Prophet Muhammad) learnt from them all that with which they were sent as well as all the determinations, signs, and demonstrations that Allah ordered them to carry. 244

Surah Al-Dukhan

Exegesis of Verse No. 29

The Holy Quran reads,

And the heaven and the earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved. (44:29)

When he was asked whether the heavens and the earth weep for anybody, Imam Ali ('a) answered,

Each and every servant (of Allah) has a prayer-place on the earth and a deed-elevator in the heavens. However, the family of Pharaoh did not have any righteous deed on the earth and any deed-elevator in the heavens. 245

Surah Al-Jathiyah

Exegesis of Verse No. 29

The Holy Quran reads,

This is Our Book; it pronounces against you with truth. Lo! We have caused all that you did to be recorded. (45:29)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

There are certain angels of Almighty Allah who, every day, descend carrying something in which they record the deeds of the children of Adam. 246

Surah Muhammad

Exegesis of Verse No. 16

The Holy Quran reads,

Among them are some who give ear unto you (Muhammad) until, when they go forth from your presence, they say unto those who have been given knowledge, 'What was that he said just now?' Those are they whose heart Allah has sealed, and they follow their own lusts. (47:16)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported as saying,

We were in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (S) when he would inform us about the latest revelations. I, as well as others who are heedful, would understand the revelations, but when we leave the Messenger of Allah (S), some others would ask, 'What was that he said just now?' 247

Surah Al-Fath

Exegesis of Verse No. 26

The Holy Quran reads,

When those who disbelieve has set up in their hearts zealotry the zealotry of the Age of Ignorance, then Allah sent down His peace of reassurance upon His messenger and upon the believers and imposed on them the word of piety, for they were worthy of it and meet for it. And Allah is Aware of all things. (48:26)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

The 'word of piety' is to say: 'la ilaha illa'llahu wallahu akbaru (There is no god but Allah, and Allah is the Most Great).' 248

Surah Al-Hujurat

Exegesis of Verse No. 12

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, shun much suspicion; for some suspicion is a crime. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You abhor that (so abhor the other)! And keep your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is Relenting, Merciful. (49:12)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Give the best probability to the deed of your brother-in-faith until you receive from him something that tears down your good probability. Never deem evil any word that has been said by your brother-in-faith as long as you can find an acceptable excuse for it. 249

Surah Qaf

Exegesis of Verse No. 21

The Holy Quran reads,

And every soul comes, along with it a driver and a witness. (50:21)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

The driver will drive the soul to the place of resurrection, and the witness will testify to or against the deeds. 250

Surah Al-Dhariyat

Exegesis of Verses 1-4

The Holy Quran reads,

By those that winnow with a winnowing, and those that bear the burden, and those that glide with ease, and those who distribute by command. (51:1-4)

Explaining these holy verses, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The winnowing that winnows is the wind. Those that bear the burden are the clouds. Those that glide with ease are the ships. Those who distribute by command are the angels. 251

Exegesis of Verse No. 7

The Holy Quran reads,

By the heaven full of paths. (51:7)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The paths are beauty and ornaments of the sky. 252

Exegesis of Verse No. 54

The Holy Quran reads,

So, withdraw from them (O Muhammad), for you are in no wise blameworthy. (51:54)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

When the holy verse (involved) was revealed, we all became certain that everybody would be imminently exposed to perdition, because Allah said to His Prophet,

'Withdraw from them!'

However, when the next verse was revealed; i.e.

'And warn, for warning profits believers (51:55),'

we were relaxed, since this verse means: Exhort by means of the Quran those who believed in you from among your people, because exhortation would benefit them. 253

Surah Al-Tur

Exegesis of Verse No. 5

The Holy Quran reads,

And (by) the roof exalted. (52:5)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have interpreted the roof exalted into the sky.254

Exegesis of Verse No. 21

The Holy Quran reads

And they who believe and whose descendants follow them in faith, We cause their descendants to join them there, and We deprive them of naught of their life's work. Every man is a pledge for that which he has earned. (52:21)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Indeed, the believers will be in Paradise along with their offspring. 255

Surah Al-Qamar

Exegesis of Verse No. 1

The Holy Quran reads,

The hour drew nigh and the moon was rent in twain. (54:1)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have related the following incident:

In Makkah, the moon was once rent into two pieces. Upon this, the Messenger of Allah (S) said to us, 'Bear witness!' 256

Exegesis of Verse No. 49

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! We have created everything by measure. (54:49)

Imam Ali ('a), condemning those who deny the predetermined measure of Almighty Allah, says,

Every nation has among its individuals the likes of the Magians. As for this nation, the likes of the Magians are those who say, 'There is no measure (matters pre-decided by Allah).' 257

Surah Al-Rahman

Exegesis of Verse No. 17

The Holy Quran reads,

Lord of the two Easts, and Lord of the two Wests. (55:17)

When he was asked about the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) said,

The rising of the sun in winter is separately different from its rising in summer. This can be easily recognized from the nearness and remoteness of the sun. 258

Exegesis of Verse No. 29

The Holy Quran reads,

All that are in the heavens and the earth entreat Him. Every day He exercises (universal) power. (55:29)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said in one of his speeches,

All praise is due to Allah Who does not die and Whose wonders do not end. It is because every day He has a task in the form of the invention of something that did not exist. It is He Who has no children so that He would share others in majesty and He is not the child of others so that He would be inherited and Himself vanish. Imagination cannot comprehend Him to figure Him out in a certain form of similitude.

The eyes have not perceived Him so that, after changing position, He would also change. It is He for Whose beginning there is no end, nor will there be any final destination for His being the last. It is He before Whom there is no time, and is not preceded by any previous era. He does not fall subject to defects of reduction or addition.

Attributes for direction, place, and instruments do not apply to Him. It is He Who knows all the hidden matters and has surpassed all intelligence by what is evident in His creatures of plans and maintenance. It is He about Whom the prophets were asked and they did not speak of Him in terms of limits and parts. They spoke of His acts and showed people His signs.

The intelligence of thinkers cannot deny Him; the One Who has created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them and between them is the Creator and no one is able to stand up to His power. It is He Who is different from the creatures and there is nothing similar to Him. It is He Who has created the creatures for His worship and has given them the ability to obey Him.

He has removed all their excuses by means of the capabilities that He has placed in them and by sending His authority in the prophets and the Imams among people, so that, after knowing the authority, whoever per-

ishes will perish, or will gain salvation whoever likes to gain salvation. Benevolent is Allah to begin and to repeat.

Then, Allah to Whom all praise is due introduced praise for His Own Self. He ended the affairs of the world and the coming of the next life with praise for His Own Self saying, 'He has judged among them with the truth and it is said, 'All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds.''

All praise is due to Allah Who has dressed up with greatness but without a body, Who has the gown of majesty and glory, which has no similarity. It is He Who has control over the Throne without losing such authority. He is exalted above the creatures but without being far from them or being in touch with them (physically).

He has no limit to reach nor there is anything similar to Him to help know Him better. All things are humble before His power and might. All things, although great, are small before Him. All things respect His greatness. They obey His authority and majesty. Glimpses of eyes are weak and exhausted in trying to comprehend Him. The imaginations of the creatures fall far short of describing Him.

He is the first before all things and there was no one before Him. He is the last after all things and there is no 'After' for Him. He has control over all things with might. He observes all places without moving thereto. No touching touches Him and no sense senses Him. He is the Lord in the heavens and the Lord on earth. He is All-wise and All- knowing.

He has given firm shape and form to His creatures the way He willed but not with following previous examples or experiencing any fatigue in the creation of the things that He has created. In the cases of the two great and heavy creatures, mankind and jinn, He began what He wanted to begin and invented what He wanted to invent, and the way He willed. He did what He did so that they would know through such evidence His Lordship. He made it possible for them to obey Him.

We thank Him with all of His praise for all of His bounties. We ask Him for His guidance to give us wisdom in our affairs. We seek refuge with

Him from the evil of our sinful deeds and ask Him to forgive our sins that we may have committed before. We testify that no one deserves to be obeyed and worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad, peace be upon him and his Household, is His servant and messenger.

He sent him with truth as a prophet, as a sign of His existence, and a guide to Him. We found guidance through him from straying and we are saved through him from ignorance. Whoever obeys Allah and His messenger has indeed gained a great success and has earned a great reward. Whoever disobeys Allah and His messenger has indeed suffered a clear loss and is subject to a painful punishment.

Do your best to succeed in obedience, listening, sincerity, good advice, and proper support. Be helpful to yourselves to keep on the straight path and shun the detested matters. Deal among yourselves with truth and cooperate thereby with me. Hold back the unjust and feebleminded hands. Make others do good deeds and prevent them from committing unlawful deeds. Appreciate excellence of the excelling people. May Allah protect you and us through guidance and make you and us steadfast in piety. I ask Allah for forgiveness for myself and for you. 259

Exegesis of Verse No. 60

The Holy Quran reads,

Is the reward of goodness aught save goodness. (55:60)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Allah the Almighty and All-majestic says: The reward of those whom I have blessed with professing that I am the One and Only God will be no less than Paradise. 260

Surah Al-Hadid

Exegesis of Verse No. 3

The Holy Quran reads,

He is the First and the Last, and the Outward and the Inward; and He is Knower of all things. (57:3)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

All praise be to Allah Who is such First that nothing is before Him and such Last that there is nothing after Him. He is such Manifest that there is nothing above Him and such Hidden that there is nothing nearer than He. 261

Imam Ali (‘a) was once asked, ‘Where was our Lord before He created the heavens and the earth?’ He (‘a) answered,

To ask ‘where’ is to ask about a place. Allah existed where there was no place. 262

Surah Al-Saff

Exegesis of Verse No. 14

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, be Allah's helpers, even as Jesus son of Mary said unto the disciples, ‘Who are my helpers for Allah?’ They said, ‘We are Allah's helpers.’ And a party of the Children of Israel believed, while a party disbelieved. Then, We strengthened those who believed against their foe, and they became the uppermost. (61:14)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

Allah has never evacuated the earth from a knowledgeable person for whom the creatures are in need and from a learnt person for sake of attaining redemption. However, these are the least in number. Allah has demonstrated that through examples from the nations of the bygone

prophets to make them lessons for the coming generations. An example of this is His saying about the disciples of Jesus.

Thus, Allah says, 'O you who believe, be Allah's helpers, even as Jesus son of Mary said unto the disciples, 'Who are my helpers for Allah?' They said, 'We are Allah's helpers.'' This means that they submitted to the preference of the people who were worthy of being preceded to others and they (the disciples) would never disdain carrying out the orders of their Lord. However, none responded to Jesus except these disciples. 263

Surah Al-Tahrim

Exegesis of Verse No. 6

The Holy Quran reads,

O you who believe, ward off from yourselves and your families a fire whereof the fuel is men and stones, over which are set angels strong, severe, who resist not Allah in that which He commands them, but do that which they are commanded. (66:6)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

This holy verse means that you should instruct yourselves and your families all items of decency and you should educate them. 264

Surah Al-Qalam

Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah reported Imam Ali ('a) as saying,

The Pen is a pen created of light and a book created of light in a preserved tablet that is witnessed by those drawn near to Almighty Allah. 265

Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi reported on the authority of Al-Dhahhak that when the people of Quraysh learnt about the Holy Prophet's preferring and respecting Ali ibn Abi Talib, they reviled at Ali and said, 'Muhammad is charmed by Ali.'

As a result, Allah the All-exalted revealed Surah Al-Qalam. He swears by the Pen and whatever is written with pen that Muhammad is not mad, because of the favor of Allah granted to him' etc. As for His saying,

'Surely, your Lord best knows him who errs from His way, and He best knows the followers of the right course, (68:7)'

the one intended by the followers of the right course is Ali ibn Abi Talib.[266]

Surah Al-Ma'arij

Exegesis of Verse No. 40

The Holy Quran says,

But nay! I swear by the Lord of the rising-places and the setting-places of the planets that We verily are Able. (70:40)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

The sun has three hundred and sixty rising-places and three hundred and sixty setting-places. It does not return to the same place from which it rises up to the next year. [267]

Surah Nuh

Exegesis of Verse No. 10

The Holy Quran reads,

And I have said, 'Implore your Lord for forgiveness. Lo! He was ever forgiving.' (71:10)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Very much imploration for Allah's forgiveness brings about abundant sustenance. 268

In one of his sermons, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Allah the Glorified has made the seeking of His forgiveness a means for the pouring down of livelihood and mercy on the people as Allah has said, 'Implore your Lord for forgiveness. Lo! He was ever Forgiving. He will send down upon you the cloud raining in torrents and help you with wealth and sons.' May Allah have mercy upon one who repents to Him and releases himself from his sins! 269

Surah Al-Jinn

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

The Holy Prophet (S) was in the middle of a date-palm ranch when the Jinn met him to apologize that they had believed that Allah would not send any further messenger. They were seventy thousand when they pledged to him that they would observe fasting, perform the prayers, defray the zakat levies, go on the ritual Hajj pilgrimage, and participate in jihad. 270

Surah Al-Muzzammil

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (S), when was asked about the exegesis of the verse:

'And chant the Quran in measure, (73:4)'

Said, The holy verse means that you should make it as clear as possible, you should not disperse it like the dispersal of the rotten dates, and you should not recite it rapidly like the reciting of poetry (without making distinction between its words). Rather, when you recite the Quran, you should pause at its miraculous sentences, you should make it touch your hearts, and you should not care when to reach the end of the Surah. 271

Surah Al-Muddaththir

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

To tuck up your garment is sort of purifying it. (Almighty Allah says:)

'And your garments do purify . (74:4)' 272

Surah Al-Qiyamah

Exegesis of Verse No. 22

The Holy Quran reads,

Some faces on that day shall be bright. (75:22)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

On the Resurrection Day, some faces will be dazzling, waiting for the reward of their Lord. 273

Surah Al-Mursalat

Exegesis of Verses 25 and 26

The Holy Quran reads,

Have We not made the earth a receptacle for both the living and the dead? (77:26)

On his journey back from the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali ('a) passed by the graveyard and said,

This is the receptacle of the dead.

He then looked at the houses of Al-Kufah and said,

These are the receptacles of the living.

He then recited the holy verse involved.[274]

Surah Al-Nazi'at

Exegesis of Verse No. 5

The Holy Quran reads,

And those who govern the event. (79:5)

Imam Ali ('a), when was asked about the meaning of this holy verse, said,

Those who govern the event are the angels. They govern the remembrance of the All-beneficent Lord as well as His commands. [275]

Surah Al-Takwir

Exegesis of Verse No. 15

The Holy Quran reads,

So, verily, I call to witness the planets that recede. (81:15)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

These are the planets that can be seen at night, but they depart from sights in daylight. [276]

The Holy Quran reads,

And (I also swear by) the night as it dissipates. (81:17)

Imam Ali ('a) says,

The dissipation of night is the departure of its darkness. [277]

Surah Al-Infitar

Exegesis of Verse No. 6

The Holy Quran reads,

O man! What has seduced you from your Lord the Most Beneficent? (82:6)

Upon reciting this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) said,

The addressee in this verse is devoid of argument and his excuse is most deceptive. He is detaining himself in ignorance. O man, what has emboldened you to commit sins? What has deceived you about your Lord? What has made you satisfied with the destruction of yourself? Is there no cure for your ailment or no awakening from your sleep? Do you not have pity on yourself as you have on others? Generally, when you see any one exposed to the heat of the sun, you cover him with shade, or if you see any one afflicted with grief that pains his body, you weep out of pity for him.

What has then made you patient over your own disease? What has made you firm in your own afflictions? What has consoled you from weeping over yourself although your life is the most precious of all lives to you? Why does not the fear of an ailment that may befall you in the night keep you wakeful, although you lie on the way to Allah's wrath due to your sins?

You should cure the disease of languor in your heart by determination and cure the sleep of neglectfulness in your eyes by wakefulness. Be obedient to Allah, love remembrance of Him, and picture to yourself that you are running away while He is approaching you. He is calling you to His forgiveness and concealing your faults with His kindness, while you are fleeing away from Him towards others.

Certainly, Great is Allah the powerful, Who is so generous, and how humble and weak you are and still you are so bold to commit His disobe-

dience although you live under His protection and undergo changes of life in the expanse of His kindness.

He does not refuse you His kindness and does not remove His protection from you. In fact, you have not been without His kindness even for a moment, whether it be a favor that He conferred upon you, a sin of yours that He has concealed, or a calamity that He has warded off from you.

What is your idea about Him if you had obeyed Him? By Allah, if this had been the case with two persons equal in power and matching in might (one being inattentive and the other showering favors upon you), then you would have been the first to adjudge yourself to be of bad behavior and evil deeds.

I truthfully say that the world has not deceived you, but you have had yourself deceived by it. The world had opened to you the curtains and divulged to you (everything) equally. And in all that, it foretold you about the troubles befalling your bodies and the decay in your power, it has been too true and faithful in promise, and it did not speak a lie to you or deceive you. There are many who advise you about it, but they are blamed, and they speak the truth about it, but they are opposed.

If you understand the world by means of dilapidated houses and forlorn abodes, then with your good understanding and far-reaching power of drawing lessons, you will find it like one who is kind over you and cautious about you. It is good abode for him who does not like it as an abode, and a good place of stay for him who does not regard it a permanent home for stay.

Only those who run away from this world today will be regarded virtuous tomorrow. When the earthquake occurs, the Day of Resurrection approaches with all of its severities, the people of every worshipping place cling to it, all the devotees cling to the object of their devotion and all the followers cling to their leader. Then on that day even the opening of an eye in the air and the sound of a footstep on the ground will be assigned its due through His justice and His equity. On that day, many an argument will prove void and a contention for excuses will stand rejected.

Therefore, you should now adopt for yourself the course with which your excuse may hold good and your plea may be proved. Take from the transient things of this world what will stay for you in the next world, provide for your journey, keep your gaze on the brightness of deliverance, and keep ready the saddles for setting off. 278

Surah Al-Inshiqaq

Exegesis of Verse No. 1

The Holy Quran reads,

When the sky is rent asunder. (84:1)

About the exegesis of this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The sky will be split from the galaxy. 279

Exegesis of Verses 7-12

The Holy Quran reads,

Then, whoso is given his account in his right hand, will truly receive an easy reckoning, and will return unto his folk in joy. But whoso is given his account behind his back, will surely invoke destruction and be thrown to scorching fire. (84:7-12)

About the people of happiness and the people of wretchedness on the

Resurrection Day, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

On the Resurrection Day, people will be of various characters and ranks. Some of them will receive an easy reckoning and will return to their folks in joy. Some others will be allowed Paradise without reckoning, because they have not engaged themselves in any of the affairs of the worldly life. Thus, reckoning will be set to those who engaged themselves in the affairs of this worldly life. Others will be interrogated for all of their deeds,

even if they are as trivial as the speck or the white spot on a date-stone. They will eventually be led to the chastisement of the blazing fire. 280

Surah Al-Buruj

Exegesis of Verses 2 and 3

The Holy Quran reads,

And by the promised day, and by the witness, and by the witnessed. (85:2-3)

Explaining this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) says,

The promised day is the Resurrection Day. The witness is Friday. The witnessed is the Immolation Day. 281

Exegesis of Verse No. 4

The Holy Quran reads,

Cursed be the makers of the pit. (85:4)

Relating the story of the makers of the pit, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Almighty Allah sent a man from Abyssinia as prophet to his people who gave the lie to him. He therefore fought against them, but they could kill his followers and capture him along with some of his other fellows. They then dug a pit and filled it up with fire. They then declared, 'Those who follow our religion and our faith must withdraw, but those who follow the religion of these people must throw themselves in fire.'

Thus, the followers of the prophet started throwing themselves in the fire. A woman with her one-month-old baby came and tried to throw herself in the fire, but she feared for her baby out of mercy and compassion. However, the baby spoke up and said, 'Do not fear! Through me and yourself in fire, because this deed is still trivial if compared to the acts that we should do for the sake of Allah.' So, she threw herself in the fire.

Her baby was one of those who spoke while they were still in the cradle. 282

Surah Al-tariq

Exegesis of Verses 13 and 14

The Holy Quran reads,

Most surely, it is a decisive word and it is no joke. (86:13-4)

Al-karith Al-A'war reported that he once entered the mosque and found people engaged in heated disputes about the affairs of the religion. He thus hurried to Imam Ali ('a) and informed him about the matter. Condemning so, Imam Ali ('a) said in amazement,

Did they really do it? I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, 'After my passing away, there shall arise a turmoil.' I asked, 'O Allah's Messenger, what will be the way out of it?' He said, 'The way out will be the Book of Allah.

It contains the news of those who lived before you, the foretelling of those who will live after you, and the judgment between you. It is the decisive word that is never joke. Any tyrannical person that forsakes the Book of Allah will be eradicated by Him. Whoever seeks true guidance in any place elsewhere will be misled by Allah. It is the strong rope of Allah, the wise reminder, and the straight path.

Whims will never be led astray if they follow it. Scholars will never have their sufficiency from it. Tongues will never be bored with it. It has answers to all questions. Its wonders never expire.' 283

Surah Al-Fajr

Exegesis of Verse No. 14

The Holy Quran reads,

Lo! Your Lord is ever watchful. (89:14)

Explicating this holy verse, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Your Lord is ever capable of punishing the committers of acts of disobedience to Him as they deserve. 284

Surah Al-Balad

Exegesis of Verse No. 10

The Holy Quran reads,

And (We) pointed out to him the two conspicuous ways. (90:10)

Imam Ali (‘a), explaining this holy verse, is reported to have said,

The two ways are good and evil. 285

Surah Al-Shams

Exegesis of Verse No. 12

The Holy Quran reads,

When the most wretched of them broke forth with. (91:12)

Imam Ali (‘a) reported that the Holy Prophet (S) said to him,

Do you know who the most wretched of the past nations was?’ He was the one who slaughtered the she-camel of Prophet Salih. Do you know who the most wretched of the last nations is? He is the one who will kill you. 286

Surah Al-Zuha

Exegesis of Verse No. 5

The Holy Quran reads,

And verily your Lord will give unto you so that you will be content. (93:5)

Imam Ali ('a) quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

On the Resurrection Day, I will intercede for my community until my Lord will call out to me, 'O Muhammad, are you content?' I will answer, 'Yes, O Lord. I am content.' 287

Surah Al-'Alaq

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that prostration is obligatory upon reading the four verses of prostration in Surah Al-Sajdah, Surah Fussilat, Surah Al-Najm, and Surah Al-'Alaq.288

Surah Al-Takathur

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Surah Al-Takathur was revealed to express the chastisement in the graves. 289

Exegesis of Verses 3 and 4

The Holy Quran reads,

Nay, but you will come to know. Then nay, but you will come to know. (102:3-4)

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

The first (verse) is about the chastisement in the grave, and the second (verse) about the chastisement at the resurrection. 290

Surah Al-Ma'un

Exegesis of Verses 4 and 5

The Holy Quran reads,

So, woe to the praying ones who are unmindful of their prayers. (107:4-5)

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

Nothing is dearer to Allah the Honorable and Exalted than prayer. Worldly affairs should not prevent you from performing your prayers at their (specific) times, because Allah the Honorable and Exalted has censured such people and said, ‘‘who are unmindful of their prayers.’ This means that they are neglectful and they do not pay enough attention to the prayer times. 291

Exegesis of Verse No. 7

The Holy Quran reads,

And they withhold the vessel. (107:7)

Imam Ali (‘a), explaining the word ma’un (vessel), says,

The ma ‘un in this verse stands for the obligatory levy (i.e. zakat). These people thus refrain from defraying it. I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, ‘Muslims are brothers of each other. When they meet each other, one of them must greet the other with salaam and the other must respond with even nicer words. They never refrain from the maun.’ When I asked about the ma‘un, the Messenger of Allah (S) answered, ‘It is rock, iron, water, and the like things. 292

Surah Al-Kawthar

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

When Surah Al-Kawthar was revealed to the Holy Prophet (S), he asked Archangel Gabriel, ‘What is the immolation that my Lord the Almighty

and All-majestic has ordered me to offer?' The archangel answered, 'The matter has nothing to do with immolation. However, He orders you to raise your hands whenever you utter the statement of takbir (i.e. Allahu-akbar) at the beginning of your prayers, at the genuflections, and after you raise your head from the genuflection.

Thus do we do and thus do the angels of the seven heavens do when they perform prayers. Everything has its ornament, and the ornament of prayer is to raise the hands at the utterance of every statement of takbir. 293

Surah Al-Tawhid (Al-Ikhlas)

In one of his sermons, Imam Ali ('a) says,

All praise be to Allah Who is proof of His existence through His creation, of His being external through the newness of His creation, and through their mutual similarities of the fact that nothing is similar to Him. Senses cannot touch Him and curtains cannot veil Him, because of the difference between the Maker and the made, the Limiter and the limited, and the Sustainer and the sustained.

He is One but not by the first in counting, is Creator but not through activity or labor, is Hearer but not by means of any physical organ, is Looker but not by a stretching of eyelids, is Witness but not by nearness, is Distinct but not by measurement of distance, is Manifest but not by seeing, and is Hidden but not by subtlety of body. He is distinct from things, because He overpowers them, and he exercises might over them, while things are distinct from Him, because of their subjugation to Him and their turning towards Him.

He who describes Him limits Him. He who limits Him numbers Him. He who numbers Him rejects His eternity. He who asks, 'how?' seeks a description for Him. He who asks, 'where?' bounds him. He is the Knower even though there be nothing to be known. He is the Sustainer even though there be nothing to be sustained. He is the Powerful even though there be nothing to be overpowered. 294

- 1. Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 3:198.
- 2. Nu'man Al-Misri, Al-Manaqib wa'l-Mathalib, pp. 98.
- 3. Ibn Kathir, Lisan Al-Mizan 3:440.
- 4. Ibn Kathir, Lisan Al-Mizan 3:440.
- 5. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad, pp. 10.
- 6. Al-Tabrisi, I'lam Al-Wara bi-A'lam Al-Huda, pp. 200.
- 7. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad, pp. 13.
- 8. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 42:279-80.
- 9. Al-Mas'udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 2:291.
- 10. Al-Mubarrad, Al-Kamil 3:142.
- 11. After awaking people, Imam Ali ('a) stood in the arch for the prayer. When he raised his head from the first prostration of the supererogatory Dawn Prayer, Shabib ibn Bahirah attacked him with his sword, but the sword hit the pillar of the mosque and the attack went in vain. He then ran away to his house. One of his cousins, who was devotee of Imam Ali ('a), suspected that his cousin had attacked the Imam ('a); he thus struck him with the sword to death. (Al-Tabrisi, I'lam Al-Wara bi-A'lam Al-Huda, pp. 200)
- 12. Ibn Taghri, Al-Nujum Al-Zahirah 1:119.
- 13. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Precept No. 47.
- 14. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Precept No. 149.
- 15. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-'Amili, Al-Majalis Al-Saniyyah 2:235-6; Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al- Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 8:137-43.
- 16. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-'Amili, Al-Majalis Al-Saniyyah 2:241.
- 17. Shaykh Al-tusi, Al-Amali, pp. 123.
- 18. Shaykh Al-tusi, Al-Amali, pp. 123.
- 19. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 42:290.
- 20. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 42:290.
- 21. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 42:290.
- 22. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 1:297-8.
  However, some writers, one of whom is Taha Husayn, argue that Imam Ali ('a) did not appoint his son Imam Al-Hasan ('a) as the next caliph and did not nominate him as the next leader. This argument is aroused from a narration that was

reported by Shu'ayb ibn Maymun Al-Wasiti. This fabricated narration reads as follows:

Some people said to (Imam) Ali, 'Will you not decide on the next caliph?' He answered, 'If Allah intends prosperity for this community, He will make them all agree unanimously on a certain person who will then be the best of them all.'

Recording the biography of Shu'ayb the narrator of this false report, Abu-Hatam (an experienced biographer) says, 'He is anonymous in the field of reporting.' Al-'Ajali also states that Shu'ayb is unknown (therefore, his reports cannot be trusted). Al-Bukhari also describes Shu'ayb as: 'His reports must be investigated.' As to Ibn Habban, he says, 'Shu'ayb, although his reports are proportionally few, reports unacceptable narrations from the famous personalities. When he is the only reporter of a narration, his narration cannot stand as sufficient proof. One of his reports that is decided as unacceptable is his report from Husayn ibn Al-Shi'bi on the authority of Abu-Wa'il that Ali was asked to appoint a next caliph' etc. (See: Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib Al-Tahdhib 4:357)

- 23. Asma' bint 'Umays is reported to have said that Imam Ali ('a), in his final spark of life, breathed in and fainted. When he recovered consciousness, he said, 'Welcome! Welcome! All praise be to Allah Who has fulfilled His promise to us and made us inherit Paradise.' When he was asked what he had seen, he ('a) answered, 'I can see the Messenger of Allah, my brother Ja'far, and my uncle Hamzah. I can see the doors to the heavens opened before me and the angles are descending to greet me and convey to me good tidings. I also can see Fatimah surrounded by her maidens and I can see my places in Paradise. 'For the like of this, let the workers work.'' (See: Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:208.)
- 24. Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:91; Tarikh Al-Tabari 6:86; Tarikh Ibn Al-Athir 3:170; Abu'l-Faraj Al- Isfahani, Maqatil Al-Talibiyyin, pp. 16.
  However, some other historicists have claimed that the heirs

of Imam Ali (‘a) trampled the dead body of Abd Al-Rahman ibn Muljim, mentioning the names of Imam Al-Husayn (‘a), Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiyyah, Abdullah ibn Ja’far, and Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) to have done so. Moreover, Taha Husayn confirms that the heirs of Imam Ali (‘a) set the body of Ibn Muljim on fire!

Firstly, these historicists have not agreed upon the person whom they claimed to have trampled the dead body of Ibn Muljim-a point that proves the falsity of their claim. Secondly, the heirs of Imam Ali (‘a) were too pious and obedient to their father to violate his instructions and they were too dutiful to violate the laws of Islam. This fact can be obviously seen from their life accounts and manners.

- 25. Al-Buladhari, Ansab Al-Ashraf 2:499.
- 26. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 42:295-6.
- 27. Ibn Abi’l-Dunya, Maqtal Al-Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talib, pp. 109.
- 28. Ibn Abi’l-Dunya, Maqtal Al-Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talib, pp. 109.
- 29. Tarikh Al-Ya’qubi 2:203.
- 30. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, in Al-Kafi 1:454, has reported that on the day of Imam Ali’s martyrdom, the place shook due to the heavy weeping of people who were as astounded as they were on the day of the Holy Prophet’s passing away. A man who was weeping hurried to the place and said, ‘We are Allah’s and to Him shall we be returned. Today, the succession to Prophethood has stopped.’ When he stopped at the door of Imam Ali’s house, he said the following laudatory words:

  May Allah have mercy upon you, O Abu’l-Hasan! You were the first of all in accepting Islam, the most sincere of all in faith, the firmest in conviction, the most pious, the most steadfast (against ordeals for the sake of Islam), the most watchful for Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him and his Household), the most careful for his companions, the most endowed with the most favorable merits, the foremost of everyone in everything, the owner of the most elevated rank,

the closest of all of them to Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him and his Household), the most similar to him in true guidance, morals, manners, and deeds, the owner of the most honorable position, and the most respected (by Almighty Allah and His Messenger). May Allah reward you on behalf of Islam, His Messenger, and the Muslims with the best rewarding!

You became stronger when his companions became weak, you advanced when they surrendered, you stood up (to face difficulties) when they showed weak- heartedness, you abode by the course of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him and his Household) as they were his companions, and you were truly his vicegerent. No one could ever compete with you or vie with you in this position in spite of the existence of hypocrites, despise of the unbelievers, malice of the enviers, and disgrace of the wicked ones. You thus managed the matters when they failed to do so, spoke (the truth) when they stammered, and carried on with the light of Allah when they stopped. As they followed you, they were guided (to the true path), your voice was the lowest (out of politeness) and was the highest in supplication, you were the least in speaking and the most eloquent of them, you were the most apposite in opinions and the most courageous, and you were the firmest in conviction, the best of them in deeds, and the most learned in questions.

By Allah I swear, you were the true leader of the religion first and last: you were thus the first (of the enduring ones) when the other people departed, and you were the last (in steadfastness) when they failed. For the believers, you were merciful father as they were your dependants; so, you carried the burdens that they were too weak to carry, you preserved that which they forfeited, you retained that which they neglected, you prepared yourself for facing those who had allied each other (against Islam), you advanced when they were dismayed, you resisted when they hurried (in absconding), you

achieved the goals for which they fought, and they faced at your hands what they had not expected. You were thus incessant and relentless torment on the unbelievers and you were support and shelter for the believers.

Thus, I swear by Allah that you won its (i.e. this worldly life) bliss and gained its reward and you attained its merits and prevailed on its worth. Your argument was never weak, your heart never deviated, your sagacity was never feeble, your determination never cowered, and you never betrayed. You were as firm as mountain, as storms could never displace you and you were as exactly as what was said about you: 'People felt secured under your government and in what was entrusted with you.' You were also as exactly as what was said about you: 'Modest in your body, strong in carrying out the orders of Allah, humble in yourself, enjoying a great standing with Allah, great in the earth, and elevated in the view of the believers.' No one could ever find fault with you or speak evil of you.

You never desired for any one save Allah and you were never lenient (unfairly) to any one. The weak, humble one was strong and mighty in your view until you give him back his due; and the strong, mighty one was weak in your view until you take the others' dues from him. The near and the remote were equal in your view. Your habit was to be uright, honest, and kind; your words were ruling and determination; your custom was forbearance and fortitude; and your view was knowledge and firmness in whatever you did. Through you, the right path was taken and the difficult was made easy. Fires were also extinguished by you and the religion became even at your hands; and Islam and the believers became mighty because of you.

You thus advanced in great strides and stopped and curbed the wrongdoings of those who came after you. You are thus too elevated to be mourned and the calamity of losing you

was so astounding for the inhabitants of the heavens as it undermined all people. Surely, we are Allah's, and to Him we shall surely return. We surrender to Allah's acts and submit ourselves to His determinations. By Allah I swear, the calamity of losing you is the ever most catastrophic for Muslims. You were haven, shelter, and unshakable fortress of the believers and, at the same time, you were rude and furious on the unbelievers. May Allah join you to His Prophet and may He never deprive us of the reward of our grief for you, and may He never cause us to stray off after you!

However, the two persons who received the news of Imam Ali's martyrdom with great pleasure and contentment were Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan and 'A'ishah.

- 31. Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 6:221; Ibn kajar, Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah, pp.
  76; Al-Shabalnaji, Nur Al-Absar, pp. 76.
- 32. Tafsir Al-Tabari 13:72; Tafsir Al-Razi (with little difference); Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:157; Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'ala Al-Sahihayn 3:129.
- 33. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:108; Al-Wahidi, Asbab Al-Nuzul, pp. 329; Tafsir Al-Tabari 29:35; Al-Zamakhshari, Tafsir Al-Kashshaf 4:600; Al-Suyuti, Al-Durr Al-Manthur 8:267.
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  Tafsir Al-Razi 4:401; Al-Suyuti, Al-Durr Al-Manthur 6:117.
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- 60. Al-Suyuti, Al-Durr Al-Manthur 4:287.
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- 102. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 18.
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- 110. Al-Suyuti, Al-Durr Al-Manthur 2:52.
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- 112. Sayyid Abd Al-A’la Al-Sabzawari, Mawahib Al-Rahman fi Tafsir Al-Quran 6:358.
- 113. Tafsir Al-Qummi 1:121.
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- 180. Tafsir Al-'Ayyashi 2:267.
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- 189. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 4.
- 190. Al-Suyuti, Al-Durr Al-Manthur 5:305.
- 191. Al-Tabrisi, Majma' Al-Bayan 7:74.
- 192. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Tawhid, pp. 268.
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- 196. Al-Suyuti, Al-Durr Al-Manthur 5:7.
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- 200. Al-Suyuti, Al-Durr Al-Manthur 5:40.
- 201. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 222.
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- 203. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 8:240.
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- 206. Shaykh Al-Saduq, 'Uyun Akhbar Al-Ridha, pp. 385-90.

- 207. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 209.
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- 210. Tafsir Al-Mizan 16:95.
- 211. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 156.
- 212. Tafsir Al-Mizan 16:120.
- 213. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 252.
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- 215. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khi•al 2:613.
- 216. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 198.
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- 232. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 192.
- 233. Tafsir Al-Mizan 17:276.
- 234. Al-Tabrisi, Majma' Al-Bayan 8:785.
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- 236. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Tawhid, pp. 234.
- 237. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 186.
- 238. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 181.
- 239. Tafsir Al-Mizan 17:386.
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- 258. Tafsir Al-Mizan 19:103.
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- 264. Al-Suyuti, Al-Durr Al-Manthur 8:210.
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- 269. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 143.
- 270. Tafsir Al-Mizan 20:47.
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Imam Ali as in Prophetic Traditions

Reference books of Hadith (Prophetic traditions) and sirah (life account of the Holy Prophet) are full of traditions that praise Imam Ali ('a) for his virtues and excellencies and raise him to the climax of superiority in the Muslim community. A deep look into these traditions makes us realize the purpose the Holy Prophet (S) sought behind these sayings and aphorisms; namely, his concentration on the personality of Imam Ali ('a) and highlighting the reasons for which the Imam was divinely selected for the next leadership of the Muslim community.

Let us now refer to some of these prophetic traditions:

Imam Ali; The Holy Prophet's Self

Al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah, 'Uthman ibn 'Affan's maternal half-brother, informed the Holy Prophet (S) that the Banu-Wulay'ah had apostatized from Islam. Angrily, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

Let the Banu-Wulay'ah keep on doing so and I will subjugate them to a man who is like myself; that is Ali, who will kill them and capture their offspring.

While saying so, the Holy Prophet (S) stroke Imam Ali's shoulder.1

'Amr ibn Al-'As reported the following:

When I came back to the Holy Prophet (S) after the Dhat Al-Salasil expedition, I thought that none would be more lovable to him than would be. I therefore asked him, 'O God's Messenger, who is the most beloved to you?' The Prophet (S) mentioned a number of persons. I then asked, 'What about Ali?' The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

This man is asking me about my own self! 2

Imam Ali; The Holy Prophet's Brother

Al-Tirmidhi, through his own chain of authority, has reported Abdullah ibn 'Umar saying:

When the Holy Prophet (S) brought into fraternal association each couple of Muslims, one from the fresh emigrants and the other from the inhabitants of Al-Madinah, Ali came to him with teary eyes and said, 'O Allah's Messenger, you have fraternized your companions with one another and left me!'

Answering him, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

As for you, you are my brother in this world and the Next World. 3

Asma' bint 'Umays reported the following:

I was present at the wedding night of Lady Fatimah and Imam Ali. The next morning, the Holy Prophet (S) came to the door of their chamber and said to me,

O Ummu-Ayman, call upon my brother.

I said, 'If he is your brother, how come that you have given him your daughter in marriage?'

The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

Yes, it is (i.e. He is truly my brother). 4

Anas ibn Malik reported the following:

One day, the Holy Prophet (S) ascended the minbar to deliver a speech. Once he finished, he asked, 'Where is Ali ibn Abi Talib?' Ali jumped and said, 'Here I am, O Allah's Messenger.' Hence, the Holy Prophet (S) embraced, kissed him on the place between his eyes, and shouted,

O Muslims, this is my brother, cousin, and son-in-law. This is my flesh, blood, and hair. This is the father of my two grandsons al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, the two chiefs of the youths of Paradise. 5

Abdullah ibn 'Umar has reported that he heard the Holy Prophet (S), who was riding his she-camel in the Farewell Pilgrimage, saying,

O Allah, please be the witness! O Allah, I have conveyed to them that this (Ali) is my brother, cousin, son-in-law, and the father of my descendants. O Allah, please throw down into Hell any one who shows enmity toward him. 6

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

When I was raised to the Seventh Sky, (Archangel) Gabriel said to me, 'Advance, Muhammad! By God, none has ever gained this gift; neither an archangel nor a missioned prophet.' Then, my Lord revealed to me something. When I returned, a caller from behind the Divine Screen said to me, 'How excellent your father Abraham is and how excellent your brother Ali is.' I thus recommend you to treat him (i.e. Ali) nicely. 7

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

When the Resurrection Day comes, I will be called from the depth of the Throne, 'O Muhammad! Excellent is your father Abraham and excellent is your brother Ali.' 8

Abu'l-tufayl 'Amir ibn Wa'ilah has reported the following:

I was standing on the doorstep on that day of the shura committee when the members disputed with one another. Among the voices that were raised, I heard Ali saying,

The people swore allegiance to Abu-Bakr while, by God I swear, I had a better right and I was worthier than he was in that matter (of the position of leadership). Nonetheless, I listened to him and obeyed lest the people would apostatize from Islam and fight against each other with swords. Then, the people swore allegiance to 'Umar while, by God I swear, I had a better right and I was more entitled to this position than he was.

Nonetheless, I listened to him and obeyed lest the people will apostatize from Islam and fight against each other with swords. Now, you want me to listen to and obey you as you are determined to swear allegiance to 'Uthman? 'Umar has included me with five persons while neither he nor they have recognized my superiority over them in righteousness, considering all of us equal. By God I swear this: If I wanted, I would enumerate my virtues that neither the Arabs, nor the non-Arabs, nor the covenanters, nor the polytheists can ever refute even one of them.

The Imam ('a) then asked,

I adjure you all! Is there any one among you who was the brother of God's Messenger save me?

They all answered, 'No, by God.'9

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

I am the true servant of Allah and the brother of His Messenger; and I am the greatest veracious one. No one will claim that he has this rank after me but a liar. I had performed prayers for seven years before other people did. 10

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir ('a) has reported that when this holy verse was revealed ''give to me an aide from my family: Aaron, my brother. Strengthen my back by him'' the Holy Prophet (S), who was on a mountain, prayed to His Lord, saying,

O Allah, please strengthen my back by my brother, Ali. 11

Imam Ali and the Holy Prophet; the Same Tree

Jabir ibn Abdullah is reported to have heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying to Imam Ali ('a),

O Ali, people are from various trees, while you and I are from one tree.

The Holy Prophet (S) then recited this holy verse:

And in the earth there are tracts side by side and gardens of grapes and corn and palm trees having one root and (others) having distinct roots.

They are watered with one water. (13:4) 12

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

Ali and I are of one tree; while the other people are from various trees. 13

Imam Ali; The Holy Prophet's Aide

Asma' bint 'Umays has reported that she heard the Holy Prophet (S), praying to God, saying,

O Allah, I will say the same prayer that my brother Moses had said to You: O Allah, please give to me an aide from my family; Ali, my brother. Strengthen my back by him, and associate him with me in my affair; so that we should glorify You much and remember You oft. Surely, You are seeing us. 14

Imam Ali; The Holy Prophet's Vicegerent

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

This (i.e. Ali) is my brother, vicegerent, and successor amongst you; therefore, listen to and obey him. 15

O Ali, you are my successor concerning my leadership of this nation. 16

Ali ibn Abi Talib is the foremost in accepting Islam, the most knowledgeable, and the leader and successor after me. 17

O people! Whose words are better than Allah's? Your Lord, Mighty is His Grace, has commanded me to assign Ali over you as the most outstanding leader, as my own successor and executor of my will, and that you should regard him as my brother and vizier. 18

Ali is part of me and I am part of him. May Allah fight him who fights Ali. 19

Ali is the leader of the creatures after me. 20

Verily, Almighty Allah has revealed to me that He would choose a brother, successor, vicegerent, and heir for me from among my commu-

nity. When I asked about his identity, the Lord said, 'He is the one whom I love and who loves Me. He is namely Ali ibn Abi Talib.' 21

On one occasion, the Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam Ali ('a),

I should not leave before appointing you as my representative. 22

Imam Ali to the Holy Prophet; Prophet Aaron to Prophet Moses

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali ('a),

Does it not please you that your standing to me is the same as (Prophet) Haron's standing to (Prophet) Moses except that there will not be any prophet to come after me? 23

Jabir ibn Abdullah has reported that he heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying to Imam Ali ('a),

Your standing to me is as same as Prophet Haron's standing to Prophet Moses except that there shall not come any prophet after me. 24

Imam Ali; the Door to the Holy Prophet's City of Knowledge

Jabir ibn Abdullah has reported that he heard the Holy Prophet (S), on the Day of Al-kudaybiyah Truce, taking Ali from the arm and saying,

This is the commander of the pious ones and the slayer of the impious ones. Victorious is he who supports him and disappointed is he who disappoints him.

Raising his voice, the Holy Prophet (S) further said,

I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate; so, he who aspires to attain the house must come to it from its gate. 25

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported as saying,

Ali is the door to my knowledge and the explainer to my nation what I have been commissioned to convey to them. To love him is faith, to hate him is hypocrisy, and to look at him is clemency. 26

Imam Ali; the Door to the Holy Prophet's Wisdom

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

I am the house of wisdom, and Ali is its gate. 27

I am the city of wisdom and Ali is its door; so, whoever inspires to attain wisdom must get it from its door. 28

Wisdom has been divided into ten parts. Ali has been given nine parts and one part only has been left for people. 29

Imam Ali; the Most Beloved to the Holy Prophet

When she was asked to identify the most beloved person to the Holy Prophet (S), 'A'ishah said, 'Fatimah is the most beloved to him.' 'Who is the most beloved to him from men?' she was asked.

She answered, ''Ali, Fatimah 's husband, is the most beloved to him as long as I know that he observes fasting frequently and offers prayers very often.'30

Mu'awiyah ibn Tha'labah has reported that a man came to Abu-Dharr, who was in the Holy Prophet's Mosque, and asked, 'Can

you tell me who the most beloved of all men to you is, since I know for sure that the most beloved to you must be the most beloved to the Holy Prophet (S)?'

Abu-Dharr answered, 'This is quite true. The most beloved of all men to me is the most beloved to the Holy Prophet (S). He is that man; i.e. Ali ibn Abi- talib.'[31]

Imam Ali; the Match of the Prophets

Addressing his companions, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

If you want to see Adam in his knowledge, Noah in his grief, Abraham in his morality, Moses in his confidential talk (to his Lord), Jesus in his age, and Muhammad in his uprightness and forbearance, you may look at the coming person.

Everybody looked around and saw Ali ibn Abi Talib('a) coming.

Imam Ali; the Chief of the Arabs

Abu-Sa'id Al-Khidri is reported to have heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying,

Ali ibn Abi Talib is the chief of the Arabs.

The attendants asked, 'You, Allah's Messenger, are the chief of the Arabs. Are you not?'

The Holy Prophet (S) replied,

I am the chief of all human beings, but Ali is the chief of the Arabs. If one loves Ali and betakes him loyally, Almighty Allah shall love him and guide him to the right path. But, if one bears malice toward him and incurs his hostility, Almighty Allah shall deafen him and make blind his eyes.

Your duty towards Ali is as same as your duty towards me; and the obedience to him is as same as the obedience to me; except that there is no prophet to come after me. He who departs Ali will have departed me; and he who departs me will have departed Almighty Allah. I am the city of wisdom, which is Paradise, and Ali is the door to that city. Ali is the best of human beings; he who rejects this fact will have disbelieved. 32

Imam Ali; the Most Beloved of all Humans to the Almighty

Anas ibn Malik has reported the following:

One day, I served the Holy Prophet (S) with a grilled bird and he ate one bite and prayed,

'O Allah, please let the most beloved person to You come to me now.'

Immediately, the door was knocked. 'Who is it?' I asked. 'It is Ali,' he answered. I, trying to dismiss him, said, 'The Messenger of Allah is now busy.'

The Prophet (S) then ate a second bite and repeated the same prayer. Again, the door was knocked. 'Who is it?' I asked. 'It is Ali,' he answered. Trying to dismiss him, I said, 'The Messenger of Allah is now busy.'

For the third time, the Holy Prophet (S) ate a third bite and repeated the same prayer. The door was then knocked again and this time Ali raised his voice that the Holy Prophet (S) could hear him.

'O Anas,' ordered the Holy Prophet (S), 'open the door.' I therefore opened the door to Ali and let him in. The moment the Holy Prophet's eyes fell on Ali, he smiled and said,

'All praise be to Allah Who has brought you, for with each bite I ate, I prayed to Him to bring to me the most beloved of all creatures to Him,

and it was you.'

Complaining to the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali ('a) said,

'I knocked the door three times and each time, Anas tried to dismiss me.'

'*Why did you do so?*' asked the Holy Prophet (S).

I answered, 'In fact, I wished a man from the Ansar would come.'

Smiling, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

'One cannot be blamed for favoring his people.' 33

Obedience to Imam Ali; Obedience to the Holy Prophet

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

Whoever obeys me has in fact obeyed Allah, whoever disobeys me has in fact disobeyed Allah, whoever obeys Ali has in fact obeyed me, and whoever disobeys Ali has in fact disobeyed me. 34

Love for Ali; Love for Allah

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

I admonish whoever believed in me and held me truthful to accept the (divinely ordained) leadership of Ali ibn Abi Talib, for whoever accepts him as the ruler accepts me as such, and whoever loves him loves me too, and whoever loves me loves Allah. Whoever hates him hates me, and whoever hates me hates Allah the Sublime and Almighty. 35

When the Holy Prophet (S) chose Ali over all others to convey Surah Bara'ah to the polytheists, he said to him,

Whoever loves you has in fact loved me, whoever loves me has in fact loved Allah, and whoever loves Allah will be allowed Paradise by Him. 36

Ibn 'Abbas has reported that the Holy Prophet (S), once, came out grasping Ali's hand and saying,

Behold! Whoever hates this one has in fact hated Allah and His Messenger, and whoever loves him has in fact loved Allah and His Messenger. 37

Abu-Rafi' has reported the following:

The Holy Prophet (S), once, sent Ali ('a) to Yemen accompanied by a man from the tribe of Aslam named 'Amr ibn Shas. When they returned home, 'Amr was dispraising and complaining against Imam Ali ('a).

Upon being informed of this, the Holy Prophet (S) summoned

'Amr, rebuked him, and said, 'Fie on you, 'Amr! Have you noticed from Ali any partiality in judgment or prejudice in distribution?' 38

'No, I have not,' answered 'Amr.

'Why have you then said what has been reported to me against you?' asked the Holy Prophet (S).

'In fact,' said 'Amr, 'I hate him and I cannot possess myself against so.'

The Holy Prophet (S) became so furious that signs of rage were clearly seen on his face. He (S) then declared,

Whoever hates him (i.e. Ali) has in fact hated me, and whoever hates me has in fact hated Allah. Whoever loves him has in fact loved me, and whoever loves me has in fact loved Allah the All-exalted. 39

Love for Ali is Faith; Hating him is Hypocrisy

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

I swear by the One Who has cleft the seed and created the breeze from nothing, the Meccan Prophet has promised me that nobody loves me except a true believer, and nobody hates me except a hypocrite. 40

Al-Musawir Al-kimyari has reported his mother as saying:

One day, I visited Ummu-Salamah and heard her quoting the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

A hypocrite shall never love Ali and a true believer shall never hate him. 41

Ibn ‘Abbas has reported that the Holy Prophet (S), once, looked at the face of Ali (‘a) and said,

No one loves you but a true believer and no one hates you but a hypocrite. He who loves you has in fact loved me and he who hates you has in fact hated me. He who loves me shall be loved by Allah and he who hates me shall be hated by Allah. Woe shall be to him who hates you after my departure. 42

Abu-Sa’id Al-Khidri has reported that the Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam Ali(‘a),

Love for you is faith, and to hate you is hypocrisy. The first to enter Paradise will be those who love you, and the first to enter Hellfire will be those who hate you.

This rule was applied by the companions of the Holy Prophet (S). In this respect, Abu-Dharr used to say,

We would recognize the hypocrites through three characteristics:

(1) they used to arouse doubts against Allah and His Messenger,

(2) they used to fail to join the congregational prayers, and

(3) they hated Ali ibn Abi- talib.43

As for Jabir ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari, the great companion of the Holy Prophet(S), he used to say,

The only mark through which we would recognize the hypocrites was their hatred towards Ali ibn Abi Talib. 44

Love for Imam Ali; The Title of the True Believer's Record

Anas ibn Malik is reported to have said:

I swear by Allah save Whom there is no god, I heard the Messenger of Allah saying,

The title of the true believer's record is their love for Ali ibn Abi Talib. 45

The Holy Prophet Foretells Imam Ali's Future

Ibn 'Abbas has quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) telling Ali ('a), You will certainly encounter a great deal of hardship after me. Imam Ali ('a) inquired, 'Shall I be able to keep my faith intact?'

The Holy Prophet (S) answered him in the affirmative.46

Kayyan Al-Asadi has reported that he heard Imam Ali ('a) saying that the Holy Prophet (S) said to him,

The nation will turn treacherous to you. You shall live adhering to my faith and be murdered for safeguarding it. Whoever loves you loves me

too, and whoever hates you hates me too, and this (Ali's beard) will be drenched with blood from this (Ali's head). 47

Imam Ali; the Bearer of Al-Hamd Standard

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali ('a):

You shall be before my hand on the Resurrection Day. When the Al-Hamd (praise) Standard is handed over to me, I will hand it over to you. Hence, you shall prevent some people from approaching my pond. 48

Abdullah ibn 'Abbas is reported to have said that he, once, heard 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab saying: Stop speaking ill of Ali ibn Abi Talib. I have noticed the Messenger of Allah (S) enduing him with a number of such peculiar characteristics that if only the family of Al-Khattab could have one of them, this would have been more preferred for me than obtaining whatever is under sunlight.

One day, Abu-Bakr, Abu-'Ubaydah, and I were among a group of the Companions. We all headed for the door of Ummu-Salamah's house where Ali stood. 'We want to see the Messenger of Allah,' we asked. 'He will come out to see you,' Ali answered. When the Messenger of Allah came out, we advanced towards him. He rested on Ali ibn Abi Talib, struck his shoulder with his hand, and said to him,

You are contended and you shall be competed. You are the foremost of all believers in belief, the most knowledgeable of all of them with the Signs of Allah, the most trustful of all of them, the fairest of all of them in distributing what everyone deserves, the most compassionate of all of them to your subjects, and you shall suffer misfortunes more than any one of them will.

You shall always be my supporter. You alone shall wash and bury my dead body. You shall precede all others in every ordeal and every tribula-

tion. After me, you shall never abandon your faith. You shall then be before my hand, carrying the Al-kamd Standard and you shall prevent others from approaching my pond. 49

Ali; the commander of the Prophet's Pond

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

Ali ibn Abi Talib shall be in charge of my pond on the Resurrection Day. My pond shall have cups as many as the stars in the skies. It shall be as vast as the distance between Al-kabiyah 50 *and Sana'a.* 51

Anas ibn Malik is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (S), once, asked him to summon Abu-Barazah Al-Aslami. When he did and the man came, Anas could hear the Holy Prophet (S) saying to Abu-Barazah these words:

Listen, Abu-Barazah! The Lord of the Worlds has entrusted to me some words about Ali ibn Abi Talib. He (the Lord) said, ''Ali is the standard of true guidance, the torch of true faith, the leader of My saints, and the illumination of all those who obey Me.'

On the morrow, on the Resurrection Day, Ali ibn Abi Talib shall be with me standing on my pond. He shall carry my standard. On the morrow too, he shall be with me carrying the keys of the hoards of my Lord's Paradise. 52

Abu-Hurayrah is reported to have said that Ali ibn Abi Talib once asked the Holy Prophet (S),

'Which one is more beloved to you; Fatimah or I?'

Answering him, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

Fatimah is more beloved to me than you are, and you are more endeared to me than all the members of my family. I see coming that you shall stop

on my pond and prevent some people from approaching it. On my pond, there shall be flagons as many as the stars of the sky. 53

Ali; the distributor of Heaven and Hell

Imam Al-Riza ('a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

O Ali, you are the distributor of Paradise and Hellfire on the Resurrection Day; you shall say to hell, 'This one is yours, but this one is mine.' 54

Without a License from Ali, No one passes the Discriminating Bridge

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

When Almighty Allah shall gather the past and the last generations on the Resurrection Day and the Discriminating Bridge (Sirat) shall be established on Hellfire, none shall be able to cross it unless one who has had a pass that is granted on account of one's loyalty to the divinely ordained leadership of Ali ibn Abi Talib. 55

Anas ibn Malik reported that on deathbed, Abu-Bakr said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying,

On the Discriminating Bridge, there is an obstacle that none can cross unless one has had a pass given by Ali ibn Abi Talib. 56

Ali; in the company of the Holy Prophet in Paradise

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali ('a),

Does it not please you that you, as well as Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, shall be with me in Paradise? Our descendants shall be behind us, our wives behind our descendants, and our partisans to our rights and lefts. 57

On another occasion, the Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam Ali (‘a),

You are my brother, associate, and companion in Paradise. 58

- 1. Nur Al-Din Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa'id wa Manba’ Al-Fawa'id 7:110.
- 2. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:400.
- 3. Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 2:299; Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:14.
- 4. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:210; Al-Nasa'i, Al-Khasa'is.
- 5. Ahmad ibn Abdullah Al-Tabari, Dhakha’ir Al-’Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi’l-Qurba, pp. 92.
- 6. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:61.
- 7. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:161.
- 8. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:162.
- 9. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 5:725.
- 10. Ibn Majah, Al-Sunan 1:12; Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak ‘ala Al-Sahihayn 3:111; Tarikh Al-Tabari 2:56.
- 11. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 7:113; Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak ‘ala
- 12. Al-Mannawi, Kunuz Al-Haqa'iq, pp. 155.
- 13. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:154.
- 14. Muhibb Al-Din Al-Tabari, Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah fi Fada’il Al-’Asharah 2:163.
- 15. Tarikh Al-Tabari 2:127; Tarikh Ibn Al-Athir 2:22; Tarikh Abi’a' 1:116; Musnad Ahmad 1:331; Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:399.
- 16. Abd Al-Husayn Sharaf Al-Din, Al-Muraja’at, pp. 208.
- 17. Abd Al-Husayn Sharaf Al-Din, Al-Muraja’at, pp. 209.
- 18. Abd Al-Husayn Sharaf Al-Din, Al-Muraja’at, pp. 209.
- 19. Al-Sahihayn 3:21.
- 20. Abd Al-Husayn Sharaf Al-Din, Al-Muraja’at, pp. 210.

- 21. Abd Al-Husayn Sharaf Al-Din, Al-Muraja’at, pp. 210.
- 22. Al-Fayruz'Abadi, Fada’il Al-Khamsah min Al-Sihah Al-Sittah 2:21.
- 23. Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa'id 9:111; Ibn Al-Sabbagh, Al-Fusul Al-Muhimmah, pp. 22.
- 24. Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 2:31; Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 3:288; Ahmad ibn kanbal, Al-Musnad 3:238.
- 25. Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 2:377.
- 26. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:156; Ibn kajar, Al-Sawa’iq Al-Muhriqah, pp. 73.
- 27. Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 2:299; Abu-Na’im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 1:64; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:401.
- 28. Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 11:204.
- 29. Abu-Na’im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 1:64; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:154 (with
little difference).
- 30. Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 5:701, H. 3874; Sunan Al-Tirmidhi 5:360.
- 31. Ibn Al-Dimashqi, Jawahir Al-Matalib 1:55.
- 32. Ibn Shadhan, Mi’at Manqabah, pp. 171.
- 33. Ahmad ibn Abdullah Al-Tabari, Dhakha’ir Al-’Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi’l-Qurba, pp. 61;
(with little difference) Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 3:171; Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al- Ghabah fi Ma’rifat Al-Sahabah 4:30; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:406; Sahih Al- Tirmidhi 2:299.
- 34. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:124.
- 35. Muhibb Al-Din Al-Tabari, Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah fi Fada’il Al-’Asharah 2:166; Nur Al-Din
- 36. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:391.
- 37. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:391.
- 38. Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa'id wa Manba’ Al-Fawa'id 9:108; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:154.
- 39. Nur Al-Din Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa'id wa Manba’ Al-Fawa'id 9:129.

- 40. Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 2:301; Sahih Ibn Majah, pp. 12; Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 2:255; Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 4:185.
- 41. Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 2:299.
- 42. Al-Shabalnaji, Nur Al-Absar, pp. 72
- 43. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:129.
- 44. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab 2:464.
- 45. Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 4:410.
- 46. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:140.
- 47. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:142; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:157.
- 48. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:400.
- 49. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 6:117.
- 50. A village in Damascus
- 51. Al-Haythami, Majma' Al-Zawa'id 1:367.
- 52. Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 14:98.
- 53. Al-Haythami, Majma' Al-Zawa'id 9:173.
- 54. Ibn kajar, Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah, pp. 75.
- 55. Muhibb Al-Din Al-Tabari, Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah fi Fada'il Al-'Asharah 2:172.
- 56. Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 10:356.
- 57. Ibn kajar, Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah, pp. 96; Muhibb Al-Din Al-Tabari, Al-Riyad Al-Nasirah fi Fada'il Al-'Asharah 2:209.
- 58. Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 12:268.

Imam Ali as reports Prophetic Traditions

The Holy Prophet's words, deeds, and confirmations (altogether known as Sunnah) played a bright role in the construction of Islam, the establishment of its foundations, and the institution of its civilization. They comprise a perfect course that achieves man's

mental and social relief. These words and deeds demonstrated the principles of ethics, the fundaments of decency, and the high moral standards. For that reason, the Sunnah occupies the second place in importance after the Holy Quran with regard to the legislation of Islamic laws.

Unfortunately, the Holy Prophet's traditions were not written during his lifetime; rather, they were memorized by his family members and his companions. When the Holy Prophet (S) departed life, the intelligent Companions felt the necessity of recording these traditions; they therefore offered the matter before Abu-Bakr who, following the opinion of 'Umar, refused to allow them to record these traditions, claiming that people would leave the Quran and engage themselves in these traditions![1]

Of course, this justification is too weak to be discussed. The reality of the matter is that the Holy Prophet's traditions are full of words and situations that confirmed the entitlement of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) to hold the position of the religious and political leadership of the Muslims, but Abu-Bakr and 'Umar did not want these traditions to be documented, lest their caliphate would be proven false.

In his reign, Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan assassinated the major Companions and paid big bribes to some dishonest persons to forge lies against the Holy Prophet (S) so as to contradict the authentic traditions.

Exposing this plot, such master scholars like Sayyid Sharaf Al-Din Al-Musawi and Shaykh Mahmud Abu-Rayyah discussed this matter masterfully and demonstrated the fabrications that were forged against the Holy Prophet (S) who had already predicted such forgeries when he declared more than once, O people, fabricators are forging lies against me. Behold! Whoever forges a lie against me deliberately, must find himself a place in Hellfire.

Depending on and making use of such forged traditions, the ruling authorities of the Umayyad and 'Abbasid dynasties based

their government on prejudice and injustice and forced people to accept many detestable things.

In brief, such fake traditions caused great catastrophes to Muslims and prevented many others from following the straight path. Back to the main topic, the majority of the traditions that Imam Ali (‘a) reported from his cousin the Holy Prophet Muhammad (‘a) pertained to ethics and good behavior the two matters that are considered the foundation of building the true personality of Muslims.

In this chapter, I would like to refer to some of these traditions, although it is inaccurate to claim comprehension of all these traditions. Objectively and comprehensively, Imam Ali (‘a) shed thorough light on the reporters of the Prophetic traditions and presented the actual motives for reporting such traditions motives that are extremely contrary to each other. The words of Imam Ali (‘a) in this subject are considered the most brilliant scientific study of the Prophetic traditions.

The trustworthy reporter, Sulaym ibn Qays Al-Hilali has reported the following:

One day, I said to Imam Ali (‘a), ‘I have heard from Salman, Al-Miqdad, and Abu-Dharr some words about the exegesis of the Holy Quran, but these words were completely different from what ordinary people say. I then heard from you words that testify to the authenticity of what these persons have said. I also heard from the ordinary people many things in such fields like the exegesis of the Holy Quran and the Prophetic traditions that are contrary to what you believe. You thus claim that such things are wrong all in all. Now, do you believe that people have deliberately forged lies against the Holy Prophet (S) and, instead, they have explained the Quran according to their personal desires?’

Answering him, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

You have asked; therefore, listen to my answer carefully so that you can understand it. Certainly, what are current among the people is both, right and wrong, true and false, repealing and repealed, general and particular, definite and indefinite, exact and surmised. Even during the Prophet's days, false sayings had been attributed to him so much so that he had to say during his sermon: 'Whoever attributes falsehoods to me makes his abode in Hell.' Those who relate traditions are of four categories, no more:

(1) *The hypocrite is a person who makes a show of faith and adopts the appearance of a Muslim; he does not hesitate in sinning nor does he keep aloof from vice; he willfully attributes false things against the Messenger of Allah may Allah bless him and his descendants. If people knew that he was a hypocrite and a liar, they would not accept anything from him and would not confirm what he says. Rather they say that he is the companion of the Prophet, has met him, heard (his sayings) from him and acquired (knowledge) from him.*

They therefore accept what he says. Allah too had warned you well about the hypocrites and described them fully to you. They have continued after the Holy Prophet. They gained positions with the leaders of misguidance and callers towards Hell through falsehoods and slanders. So, they put them in high posts and made them officers over the heads of the people, and amassed wealth through them. People are always with the rulers and after this world, except those to whom Allah affords protection. This is the first of the four categories.

(2) *Then there is the individual who heard (a saying) from the Holy Prophet but did not memorize it as it was, but surmised it. He does not lie willfully. Now, he carries the saying with him and relates it, acts upon it and claims that: 'I heard it from the Messenger of Allah.' If the Muslims come to know that he has committed a mistake in it, they will not accept it from him, and if he himself knows that he is on the wrong he will give it up.*

(3) *The third man is he who heard the Prophet ordering to do a thing and later the Prophet prevented the people from doing it, but this man did not know it, or he heard the Prophet refraining people from a thing and later*

he allowed it, but this man did not know it. In this way, he retained in his mind what had been repealed, and did not retain the repealing tradition. If he knew that it had been repealed he would reject it, or if the Muslims knew, when they heard it from him, that it had been repealed they would reject it.

(4) *The last, namely the fourth man, is he who does not speak a lie against Allah or against His Prophet. He hates falsehood out of fear for Allah and respect for the Messenger of Allah, and does not commit mistakes, but retains (in his mind) exactly what he heard (from the Prophet), and he relates it as he heard it without adding anything or omitting anything. He heard the repealing tradition, he retained it and acted upon it, and he heard the repealed tradition and rejected it. He also understands the particular and the general, and he knows the definite and indefinite, and gives everything its due position.*

The sayings of the Prophet used to be of two types. One was particular and the other common. Sometimes a man would hear him but he would not know what Allah, the Glorified, meant by it or what the Messenger of Allah meant by it. In this way, the listener carries it and memorizes it without knowing its meaning and its real intention, or what was its reason.

Among the companions of the Messenger of Allah all were not in the habit of putting him questions and ask him the meanings, indeed they always wished that some Bedouin or stranger might come and ask him (peace be upon him) so that they would also listen. Whenever any such thing came before me, I asked him about its meaning and preserved it. These are the reasons and grounds of differences among the people in their traditions. 2

Expressing his great status with the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali ('a) added,

I always had a special time during the day and at night with the Prophet. He would let me be with him during these times. All the companions of the Prophet knew well that he never treated anyone else this way. Sometimes, the Prophet came to see me in my house. Sometimes, I went to see

him in his house. He would then tell his wives to leave the room and have a private meeting with me. When the Prophet came to see me in my house, he would not tell Fatimah or any of my children to leave.

He responded to whatever I asked. He talked whenever I finished asking questions and remained silent. He would clearly recite to me whatever Quranic verses that were revealed to him so that I would write them with my own handwriting. He taught me their interpretation, exegesis, repealing, being repealed, decisiveness, allegory, particularity, generality, and the other related issues. He asked Almighty Allah to help me memorize them. I have not forgotten any of the verses of the Holy Quran and any of the knowledge which he stated to me and I wrote it down.

The Prophet did not withhold anything from me and taught me whatever Almighty Allah had taught him including such issues as the legitimate and the illegitimate things, the obligatory and the forbidden deeds, the knowledge contained by the divinely revealed books of the previous prophets, and their enjoining to do good deeds and admonishing against evil deeds.

I memorized everything and did not forget even a single item. Then, he put his hand on my chest and asked Almighty Allah to fill up my heart with knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and light. I said, 'O Prophet of Allah! May my parents be your ransom! I have forgotten nothing and have written all of that which you taught me since the time you prayed to Almighty Allah for me. Are you worried that I may forget them?' The Prophet replied, 'No. I am not worried about that at all.' 3

Sulaym's tradition was proved authentic by Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir ('a). Aban once came to Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and presented this tradition before him. The Imam ('a), bathed in tears, said,

'Truthful was Sulaym. After the martyrdom of my grandfather Al-Husayn, Sulaym came to my father and I was sitting next to him and conveyed to him this tradition. My father said, 'You are true. My father and my uncle Al-Hasan conveyed to me these words of Imam Ali Amir

Al-Mu'minin (‘a). They said to him, you are truthful. Our father said these words to you in our presence. We thus testify to you.’

Let us now refer to a collection of traditions that Imam Ali (‘a) reported from the Holy Prophet (S) on miscellaneous topics:

Compatibility With The Prophetic Practice

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

No word is worthy unless it is attached to a deed. No deed is worthy unless it is attached to (pure) intention. No word, deed, and intention can be worthy unless they correspond to the Prophetic practice. 4

Acting Upon The Prophetic Practices

Imam Ali (‘a) reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying,

Adhere inseparably to the Prophetic practice, for a little deed that is compatible with the Prophetic practice is better than a much deed that is innovative. 5

Importance Of Knowledge

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying, Knowledge is kept in hoards whose clue is to ask. So, ask (about knowledge) so that Allah will have mercy upon you. In a question, four persons are awarded: (1) the asker, (2) the teacher, (3) the listener, and (4) the answerer.6

Learning And Teaching The Quran

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

The best of all of you are those who learn and teach the Quran. 7

Seeking Knowledge

Imam Ali (‘a) reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying,

Seeking knowledge is a duty that is incumbent upon every Muslim person. So, seek knowledge from its sources and quote it from its people. Verily, to learn knowledge for the sake of Allah is a rewardable act, to seek it is a sort of worship, to discuss it with others is a sort of glorifying Allah, to act upon it is a sort of holy struggle, to teach it to those who do not know it is a sort of almsgiving, and to confer it to its people is a sort of seeking nearness to Allah the All-exalted.

This is because knowledge is the guidepost to what is lawful and what is not, the signpost on the paths to Paradise, the entertainer in loneliness, the companion in estrangement and desolation, the narrator in isolation, the guide in ease and difficulty, the weapon against enemies, and the ornament with the friends.

By knowledge, Allah raises some people to make them the leaders to prosperity whose traces are followed, deeds are patterned, opinions are approved, and friendships are desired by the angels who rub them with their wings and bless them in their prayers. Every wet and dry thing implores Allah’s forgiveness for these (knowledgeable people), including the fishes and pests of the oceans and the beasts and cattle of the lands.

Verily, knowledge is the life of hearts against ignorance, the light of sights against darkness, and the strength of physiques against weakness. Knowledge drives one to the abodes of the virtuous ones, to the sessions of the righteous ones, and to the high ranks in this world and the other world.

For the knowledgeable, to remember Allah is equal (in reward) to observance of fasting and to learn it is equal to practicing devotional acts. Through knowledge, the Lord is obeyed and worshipped, relation ties are strengthened, and what is lawful and what is not are recognized.

Knowledge is the leader of action, and action is its follower. It is inspired to the happy ones, while the unhappy ones are deprived of it. Blessed be those whom Allah does not deprive of gaining a share of knowledge. 8

Seeking Knowledge Is Sort Of Worship

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

Whoever goes on a journey seeking a field of knowledge in order to return a false matter to the truth or an item of deviation to the true guidance, his action will be equaled (in reward) to a forty year worship. 9

Seeking Knowledge For Allah's Sake

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying, Whoever seeks knowledge for the sake of Allah, will become humbler in view of himself when he makes a scientific achievement, more modest among people, more pious to Allah, and more knowledgeable in the religious affairs. Such one will benefit from his knowledge and will help others benefit from it.

However, whoever seeks knowledge in order to attain worldly gains, higher status, and a post near the ruler, will be haughtier the more he learns and will become debased in the sight of people. He will also be haughty before Allah and will become aloof increasingly from the religion. Such one will not benefit from his knowledge. He must then stop seeking knowledge for such purposes and stop condemning himself. He

will thus gain nothing but regret and disgrace on the Resurrection Day. 10

Seeking Knowledge For Purpose Of Arguing The Knowledgeable

One of the most wonderful precepts that the Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam Ali ('a) was this one:

As for those who learn (knowledge) for the purpose of disputing with the foolish ones, vying proudly with the scholars, or attracting people's attentions so that they will deify them, they should find themselves a place in Hellfire. 11

The Ink Of Scholars

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

On the Resurrection Day, the ink of the scholars will be weighed out against the blood of the martyrs. Then, the ink of the scholars will outweigh the blood of the martyrs. 12

Two Gluttonous Persons Are Never Sated

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

Two kinds of people with great appetites do not become satisfied. There is a person of great appetite for the worldly gains, and a person with great appetite for knowledge. In the matters of the worldly gains, if one limits himself to what Allah has made lawful for him, he is saved, and if one accumulates such gains in unlawful ways, he is destroyed, unless he re-

pents and changes his ways. In the matters of knowledge, if one acquires it from people of knowledge and practices accordingly, he is saved and if one uses it for worldly gains, then that is all he gets. 13

The learned in religious knowledge

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

Excellent is the man who is well-versed in the religious knowledge. If he is needed, then he will be useful; and if he is not needed, then he will benefit himself. 14

The Obeyed Scholar

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

Life is worthless except for two men: an obeyed scholar and a vigilant listener. 15

The Precedence Of Intelligence

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying to him,

O Ali, if people seek proximity to their Creator through the various fields of decency, you must seek proximity to Allah through the various fields of intelligence. Once you do so, you will gain priority over them in ranks and closeness to people in this world and in the other world with Allah. 16

Ignorance And Intelligence

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali (‘a),

O Ali, there is no poverty harsher than ignorance and there is no wealth more beneficial than intelligence. 17

A Knowledgeable Among Ignorant People

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

A knowledgeable man amongst ignorant people is like a living one among the dead. Verily, for the seeker of knowledge, everything implores Allah’s forgiveness, even the fishes and pests in oceans and the pests and cattle on the lands. So, seek knowledge, for it is the tie between Allah, the Almighty and All-glorified, and you. Verily, the seeking of knowledge is a duty imposed on every Muslim. 18

Concealment Of Knowledge

Imam Ali (‘a) reported that he heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying,

Whoever conceals knowledge where it must be demonstrated and where there is no need for practicing self-protection after he has been asked about it, will come on the Resurrection Day reined with a bridle of fire. 19

Issuance Of Verdicts Without Knowledge

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

Whoever issues verdicts to the people without having knowledge with the matter, will be cursed by the angels of the heavens and the earth. 20

The Reality Of Faith

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

A servant (of Allah) will not be considered faithful before he believes in four things: (1) he must bear witness that there is no god save Allah (2) and that I am the messenger of Allah Who has sent me with the truth. (3) He must believe in resurrection after death, and (4) he must believe in the predetermined acts of Allah. 21

The Reality Of Belief In Allah's Unity

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

The outer aspect of true monotheism lies in its inner aspect, and its inner aspect lies in its outer aspect. His outer aspect can be described, but it cannot be seen. His inner aspect is too present to be invisible. He is sought everywhere while no place is empty of Him. He is always present, but He is beyond all limits and, meanwhile, He is absent but He cannot be missed. 22

The Expression: There Is No God But Allah

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

Allah, majestic be His Majesty, says: 'There is no god but Allah' is My fortress. Hence, whoever enters My fortress will be saved from My chas-

tisement. 23

When he reported this tradition, Imam Al-Riza ('a) added,

'This word is contingent upon some conditions one of which is showing love for us the Ahl Al-Bayt.' 24

The Blessing Of Monotheism

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

The reward of one whom Allah the Almighty and All-majestic endued with believing in Allah's unity is nothing but Paradise. 25

Obedience To Allah

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (S) as saying,

No obedience to any mortal must be shown when it causes disobedience to Allah. 26

Having Good Opinion About Allah

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (S), from his minbar, said,

I swear by the One besides whom no one else deserves to be worshipped, a believer never receives any good in this life and in the hereafter, except because of his hopefulness toward Allah, his confidence in Allah, his good moral behavior and his abstaining from backbiting the believers. I swear by the One besides whom no one else deserves to be worshipped, Allah does not punish a believer after his repenting and asking forgiveness ex-

cept because of his despair toward Allah, his shortcoming in his hope from Allah, his bad moral behaviors and his backbiting of the believers.

I swear by the One besides whom no one else deserves to be worshipped that, hope of a believer does not exist without Allah running his affairs according to the hopeful intentions of the believer. It is because nobility is of the attributes of Allah; in His hand is all good, and He considers Himself indebted toward His believing servants, who are hopeful about Him, not to allow their hope remaining fruitless. Therefore, be hopeful about Allah and be interested with Him. 27

Hoping For Something That Achieves Allah's Pleasure

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (S) said,

Whoever hopes for something that achieves the pleasure of Allah the Almighty and All-majestic will not leave this world before Allah gives him that thing. 28

Things Approximating To Allah

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said:

One day, a man asked the Holy Prophet (S) to guide him to an act that will not prevent him from entering Paradise.

The Holy Prophet (S) thus instructed,

Do not be angry, do not beg people for anything, and wish for people whatever you wish for yourself. 29

Allah Is Oft-Forgiving

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Around the Divine Throne, this statement has been written four thousand years before the creation of this world: ‘Most surely, I am most forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good, then continues to follow the right direction.’ 30

The Holy Prophet Attires Imam Ali With A Turban

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

The Messenger of Allah (S) attired me with a turban. He dropped it from the back and then said to me, ‘Verily, Allah the Almighty and All-majestic equipped me on the Battle of Badr and the Battle of hunayn with angels who wore such a turban. Verily, turban interposes between disbelief and faith.’ 31

The Holy Prophet Visits Imam Ali

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

The Messenger of Allah (S) visited us and spent that night with us. Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn were asleep, but Al-Hasan woke up and asked for water. The Messenger of Allah (‘a) went to a skin of water that we used to use. He poured water from that skin into a cup and gave it to Al-Hasan. Al- Husayn took the cup from the hand of Allah’s Messenger to drink, but he stopped him and gave the cup to Al-Hasan.

Upon this situation, Fatimah said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger, it seems that you love Al-Hasan more.’ Allah’s Messenger (S) replied, ‘No, I do not. It is only that Al-Hasan first asked for water. You, these two (sons), this sleeping man (Ali), and I shall be in the same place on the Resurrection Day.’ 32

The Holy Prophet's Instructions To Imam Ali

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali ('a),

O Ali, I am going to give you some instructions that you should maintain. O Ali, to avoid pleasing anyone and discontenting Allah, thanking anyone for a favor that Allah has given to you, and reproaching anyone for something that Allah has not given to you these are parts of the conviction.

The sustenance cannot be obtained through (any sort of) niggardliness and will not be ceased when someone hates it. Out of His wisdom and grace, Allah has made relief and delight lie in conviction and satisfaction, and made care and grief lie in suspect and malice.

O Ali, there is no poverty harsher than ignorance, no fortune better than the intellect, no loneliness drearier than pride, no victory like counseling, no intellect like moderation, no lineage like good manners, and no worship like pondering (over things).

O Ali, untruth is the epidemic of talking, oblivion the epidemic of knowledge, laziness the epidemic of worship, to remind reproachfully (of your favors) the epidemic of leniency, despot the epidemic of courage, showing off the epidemic of handsomeness, and pride the epidemic of (belonging to good) ancestry.

O Ali, keep up saying the truth and your mouth will never utter any single lie. Never approach any treason. Fear Allah as if you see Him before you. Sacrifice your property and soul for the sake of your religion. Ride the good manners and avoid the ill manners.

O Ali, the most favorable deeds to Allah are three: the best worshipper is he who fulfills the obligatory duties of Allah properly. The most pious of people is he who abstains from the forbidden matters. The wealthiest of people is he who satisfies himself with that which Allah has given to him.

O Ali, three characters are the high moral standards: they are to regard him who ruptured his relations with you, give him who deprived you (of his bestowals), and pardon him who wronged you.

O Ali, three matters save you: (They are) to control your tongue (stop saying obscene language or stop reviling at people), to weep for your sins, and to contend with your home.

O Ali, three characters are the masters of deeds: they are to treat people fairly, to equalize your brothers-in-faith to yourself, and to thank Allah under any condition.

O Ali, three categories (of people) are the guests of Allah. The first is a man who visits his faithful brother for Allah's sake. This man is certainly Allah's guest, and it is incumbent upon Allah to honor His guests and satisfy their needs. The second is a man who offers a prayer and immediately offers another. He is surely Allah's guest and it is incumbent upon Allah to honor His guest. The third are the performers of Hajj and 'Umrah pilgrimages. They are the delegations to Allah, and it is incumbent upon Allah to honor His delegations.

O Ali, three matters are rewarded in this world and the world to come: Going on Hajj pilgrimage eradicates poverty, almsgiving eradicates catastrophes, and regard of the relatives prolongs the lifetime.

O Ali, the deeds of those who do not enjoy the following three characters are worthless: piety that impedes against committing acts of disobedience to Allah the Glorified and Majestic, knowledge that protects against the ignorance of the foolish ones, and an intellect that helps in associating with people courteously.

O Ali, three men will be made to stand under the shade of the (Divine) Throne on the Day of Resurrection: they are a man who likes for his friend whatever he likes for himself, a man who stops doing anything before he realizes whether it pleases or displeases Allah, and a man who does not find fault with his friends before he himself gets rid of that fault. A man will find a new fault with himself whenever he gets rid of one. It

is quite sufficient for a man to engage himself in amending his own defects.

O Ali, three matters are within the doors to charity: generosity, nice wording, and steadfastness against harm.

O Ali, it is written in the Torah that four matters always accompany other four ones. He who begins his day with acquisitiveness is beginning his day with discontentment to Allah. He who complains about misfortune is complaining his Lord. Two thirds of the religion of him who acts humbly before a rich man come to nothing. The people of this community who will be in Hellfire are surely those who deride and disregard the Verses (or signs) of Allah.

O Ali, except three, every eye will be weeping on the Day of Resurrection: an eye that spent a night sleeplessly for Allah's sake, an eye that is lowered before what Allah has prohibited to gaze, and an eye that shed tears due to fearing Allah.

O Ali, blessed be the face (of an individual) that Allah notices (him) weeping for a sin, which no one has seen except Him.

O Ali, three matters are destructive and three others are rescuing. The three destructive matters are the pursued passion, the obeyed niggardliness, and self-conceit. The three rescuing matters are to treat (others) fairly in both situations of satisfaction and displeasure, to be moderate in both situations of richness and poverty, and to fear Allah secretly and openly. Fear Allah as if you see Him. If you do not see Him, He can surely see you.

O Ali, telling untruths may be acceptable only in three situations: in the stratagem of wars, promising the wife, and for reconciliation between people.

O Ali, truth is discommended in three situations: in states of talebearing, informing the husband of what he does not like to hear about his wife, and telling the falsity of a speech of goodness.

O Ali, four matters go uselessly: to eat after (attaining) satiety, to light a lamp in the moonlit, to seed in the briny land, and to do favors to the undeserving.

O Ali, four matters are the quickest in punishment: to recompense the favor with mistreatment, to trespass him who does not show hostility, to break the faith of the party who keeps up his faith, and to rupture your relations with the relatives who regard you properly.

O Ali, those who keep these four characters enjoy perfect Islam: telling truths only, showing gratitude, prudence, and good mannerism.

O Ali, the true richness is surely to be kept away from asking from people. To beg people frequently is surely humility. It is also the true poverty.

O Ali, a faithful believer must enjoy three characteristics: fasting, offering prayers, and giving alms. Likewise, the false believer enjoys three characteristics: he flatters slavishly when he witnesses (a situation), backbites, and rejoices over the others' misfortunes.

The unjust people must enjoy three characteristics: they dominate him who is less powerful than they are by means of their powers, they dominate him who is more powerful than they are by means of acts of disobedience (to Allah), and they support the oppressors. The showy has three characteristics: he activates among people, he becomes lazy when he is alone, and he desires to be praised in all states.

The hypocrite has three characteristics: he lies in speech, fails to fulfill his trusts, and breaks his promise. The indolent has three characteristics: he slackens until he neglects, neglects until he wastes, and wastes until he commits a sin. The intelligent ones should always be active except in three situations; in seeking the worldly earnings, stepping for a reward, and gaining a legal pleasure.

O Ali, there is no poverty harsher than ignorance, no fortune more useful than the mind, no loneliness gloomier than self-esteem, no activity like moderation, no piety like abstinence, and no ancestry like good man-

nerism. Telling lies is the epidemic of speech, oblivion the epidemic of knowledge, reminding (others of your favors) reproachfully the epidemic of leniency.

O Ali, whenever your sight falls on the new moon, you should repeat allahu-akbar (Allah is the Most Great) three times and say, 'All praise be to Allah Who created you and me and made you on various stages and made you a sign for all peoples.'

O Ali, whenever you look in a mirror, you should repeat allahu-akbar (Allah is the Most Great) three times and say, 'O Allah, please better my morals in the same way as You have bettered my creation.'

O Ali, whenever you encounter a matter that frightens you, you must say, 'O Allah, (I implore You) in the name of Muhammad and Muhammad's Household to release me from my fear.'

O Ali, if you feel a snake in your luggage, you should allow it three times. In the fourth, you should kill it, because it, in this case, is atheist.

O Ali, you should kill any snake that you see in your way. I have taken a pledge on the jinn that they should never be in the appearance of a snake.

O Ali, four characters are signs of unhappiness: solidity of the eye, hard-heartedness, long hope, and fondness of the worldly pleasures.

O Ali, whenever someone praises you face to face, you should say, 'O Allah, please make me better than what he thinks of me, forgive my sins that he does not know, and do not blame me for what he has said.'

O Ali, whenever you copulate with your wife, you should say, 'In the Name of Allah. O Allah, please take Satan away from us and from what you will grant us.' If it is ordained that you will be given a baby, Satan will never hurt it (if you say these words).

O Ali, begin (your meals) with salt and end with salt. Salt is surely the cure of seventy diseases the least of which is psychosis and leprosy.

O Ali, use the olive oil. Satan will not approach those who use the olive oil for forty nights.

O Ali, do not copulate with your wife at the fifteenth night of every (lunar) month and at the first night of every (lunar) month. Have you not noticed that the insane are often affected on these two nights?

O Ali, if you have a baby, you should recite the adhan (i.e. the ritual call to prayer) statements in his right ear and the iqamah (i.e. the prefatory statements of the ritual prayers) in the left. Thus, Satan will never affect him/her.

O Ali, may I inform you of the evilest people?' They are those who never forgive and never overlook. May I inform of those who are worse than those people are?' They are those whose evil is not secured and good is not expected from them.

O Ali, do not go to the bathroom naked. Damned are those who go to the bathroom naked and those who look at them.

O Ali, do not wear a ring in the forefinger or the middle finger. The people in the time of Prophet Lot used to wear their rings in those two fingers. You should never disrobe the pinkie (A ring should always be in your pinkie).

O Ali, Almighty Allah surely likes the servant (of Him) who prays him with these words: 'O Lord, please forgive me. Except You, no one forgives the sins.' In this case, the Lord will answer, 'O My angels, My servant has known that except Me, no one forgives the sins. Be the witnesses, I have forgiven him.'

O Ali, beware of telling untruths, for it blackens the face; and the teller of lies will be recorded with Allah as liar. Honesty whitens the face and the honest will be recorded with Allah as truthful. You should know that honesty is blessed and lie is ill-omened.

O Ali, beware of backbiting and spreading malicious gossip. Backbiting breaks the (ritual) fasting and spreading malicious gossip brings about

punishment in the graves.

O Ali, do not swear by Allah whether you say the truth or not, except in cases of emergency. Do not make Allah to be a hindrance to your good deeds, because of your oath, for Allah will never have compassion or custody on one who swears by His Name falsely.

O Ali, do not care for tomorrow's livelihood. Every tomorrow comes with its livelihood.

O Ali, beware of disputation, for it begins with ignorance and ends with regret.

O Ali, persist in using toothbrush, for it purifies the mouth, satisfies the Lord, and betters the sight. Cleaning the teeth (with a special stick) makes the angels approach you, for they dislike the malodor of those who do not clean their mouths after eating.

O Ali, do not be angry (under any circumstances). If you are enraged, you should sit down and think of the Lord's power over His servants; yet, He treats them leniently. If someone says to you, 'Fear Allah,' you should try to relinquish your rage and cling to your (feeling of) clemency.

O Ali, whatever you spend on yourself, you may anticipate that Allah will compensate you for it; therefore, you will surely find it saved (for you) with Allah.

O Ali, show good mannerism towards your folks, neighbors, associates, and friends so that Allah will record the highest ranks for you.

O Ali, you should dislike for others whatever you dislike for yourself and like for them whatever you like for yourself. This will make you a just arbitrator and a fair judge. Furthermore, the inhabitants of the heavens will favor you and the inhabitants of the earth will love you. Try to act upon these instructions of mine to you. 33

Other Instructions Of The Holy Prophet To Imam Ali

The Holy Prophet (S) said,

O Ali, I instruct you to abide by some traits; therefore, you may maintain them. O Allah, please help him (maintain these traits).

Abide by honesty, because no single lie must come out from your mouth. Abide by godliness and never dare to commit any treacherous act. Fear Allah as if you can see Him (before you).

Weep for Allah; for each tear, a house will be built for you in Paradise. Sacrifice your property and blood for your religion. Follow my practice in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

As for fasting, you may observe it on three days every month: the first Thursday, the middle Wednesday, and the last Thursday of each month. Give alms abundantly until you believe that you have certainly spent lavishly.

Adhere to the Night Prayer. Adhere to the Night Prayer. Adhere to the Night Prayer. Adhere to the Midday Prayer. Adhere to the Midday Prayer. Do not miss raising your hands toward your Lord and turning them very often. Abide by reciting the Holy Quran under all circumstances. Abide by washing your teeth with every time of ritual ablution. Stick to the nobilities of character and act upon them. Avoid indecencies. If you do it not, then blame none but yourself. 34

The Holy Prophet's Precepts to Imam Ali Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

When the Messenger of Allah (S) ordered me to go to Yemen, he said these teachings to me:

O Ali, he who chooses the best among many choices will never feel perplexed; and he who seeks others' consult will never feel sorry.

O Ali, do not miss the early dawn hour, for the earth seems easier at night than in daylight.

O Ali, begin your journey in the early morning in the Name of Allah, for

Allah the All-exalted has decided to bless my people who begin their works in the early morning.' 35

O Ali, ways of sleeping are four: the prophets sleep on their backs, the faithful believers sleep on their right sides, the infidels and hypocrites sleep on their left sides, and the devils sleep on their faces. 36

The Holy Prophet's Precept To Khalid Ibn Zayd

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said the following:

One day, Khalid ibn Zayd visited the Holy Prophet (S) and said, 'O Allah's Messenger, please give me some instructions. However, the less the better, so that I can retain.'

The Holy Prophet (S) thus said,

I will give you five instructions:

(1) *Despair of what is possessed by people, for this is the true richness.*

(2) *Beware of greed, for it is the present poverty.*

(3) *Always perform your prayer as if it is the farewell (i.e. last) prayer.*

(4) *Beware of doing things from which you will have to apologize.*

(5) *Love for your brother whatever you love for yourself.*37

Settlement Of Debts Precedes, Distribution Of The Shares Of Inheritance

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

(The Holy Prophet) Muhammad (S) decided that the debts of a dead person must be settled before distributing the shares of his/her inheritance. Yet, you usually read the will before settling the debts. He also decided that full brothers are preceded to half brothers in inheritances. 38

Importance Of Wills

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali (‘a),

O Ali, whoever fails to write his will sensibly before his death, lacks reason and manliness and will be deprived of intercession. 39

The Holy Prophet Prays For Imam Ali

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

One day, Allah’s Messenger (S) visited me when I was suffering pans of an ailment and found me repeating these supplicatory words:

O Allah, if my time of death has come, then please give me rest; and if it is not yet to come, then please remove this ailment from me; and if this is one of Your trials, then please help me stand it.

The Holy Prophet (S) asked, ‘What have you just said?’ I repeated before him what I had just said. He (S) hit me with his leg and said, ‘What have you just said?’ I once again repeated what I had said. Then, the Holy Prophet (S) prayed Allah, saying,

O Allah, please grant him wellbeing. O Allah, please restore him to health.

Since that day, that ailment did not come upon me ever again.[40]

The Holy Prophet's Supplication During Journeys

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that whenever the Holy Prophet (S) intended to go on a journey, he would say,

O Allah, through You only can I move, through You only can I wander, and through You only can I walk. [41]

Imam Ali ('a) is also reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (S) used to say this supplicatory prayer before he would make a journey,

O Allah, through You only can I move, through You only can I reside, and through You only can I pace. [42]

A Supplicatory Prayer Of The Holy Prophet

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (S) taught him to say this doxological prayer whenever he would encounter a trouble:

There is no god but Allah the All-clement and All-noble. All glory be to Allah. Blessed and exalted be Allah the Lord of the Great Throne. All praise be to Allah the Lord of the worlds. [43]

Imam Ali ('a) is also reported to have said:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said to me, 'May I convey to you some words that if you repeat them, you will be forgiven, although you are already forgiven?'

There is no god but Allah the All-clement and All-noble. There is no god but Allah the All-high and All-great. All glory be to Allah the Lord of the Seven Skies and the Lord of the Great Throne. All praise be to Allah the Lord of the worlds. 44

The Holy Prophet's Supplication Upon The Accomplishment Of The Witr Prayer

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (S) used to say this supplicatory prayer upon his accomplishment of the one-unit Witr Prayer (that is performed at the last hour of night):

O Allah, I do seek the guard of Your pleasure against Your wrath, I do seek the guard of Your grant of wellbeing against Your punishment, and I do seek Your guard against Yourself. I can never enumerate Your favors that I should thank. You are thus as same as You have praised Yourself. 45

The Holy Prophet's Prayer

Describing the Holy Prophet's prayer, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said, When he would commence the ritual prayers, the Holy Prophet (S) would utter the statement of Allahu-Akbar and then say these supplicatory words:

I have turned myself to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, [and I am] upright and Muslim, and I am not of the polytheists. Surely, my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. And I am of those who submit. 46 *O Allah, there is definitely no god save You.*

You are my Lord and I am Your servant. I have done wrong to myself and I am now confessing of my sins. So, please forgive me all of my sins, for none can forgive sins save You. Please guide me to the best of morals, because none can guide to them save You. Please take me away from the bad traits, for none can take me away from them save You. Blessed You are. Exalted You are. I implore Your forgiveness and I repent before You.

In the ritual genuflection, the Holy Prophet (S) would say these supplicatory words:

May Allah listen to hi whom praises Him. O our Lord, all praise be to You as much as the infinite range of the heavens and the earth and whatever lies between them and as much as the infinite range of whatever You wish beyond that.

In the ritual prostration, the Holy Prophet (S) would say these supplicatory words:

O Allah, to You only have I prostrated myself. In You only have I believed. To You only have I submitted. My face is prostrating for the One Who has created and fashioned it; so, He fashioned it in the most excellent image. He then split its hearing and its sight. So, blessed be Allah the best of all creators.

Upon accomplishing his prayer, the Holy Prophet (S) would pray Almighty Allah, saying,

O Allah, please forgive my past, recent, secret, open, and burdensome sins as well as all the sins that You know better than I do. You are the grantor of precedence and the postponing. There is no god save You. 47

The Middle Prayer

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

The middle prayer is the Afternoon (‘Asr) Prayer.48

The Holy Prophet And The Middle Prayer

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying on the Day of the Allies (i.e. during the Battle of the Ditch),

They have preoccupied us from performing the middle prayer. May Allah fill in their graves and houses with fire!

The Holy Prophet (S) then performed it in the time between the Sunset (Maghrib) and the Evening (‘Isha') Prayers.

The Holy Prophet’s Words In The Ritual Genuflection

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (S) used to say these devotional words in the ritual genuflections of his prayers:

O Allah, I have genuflected myself for You, I have believed in You, and I have submitted to You. You are my Lord. My hearings, sight, brain, bones, nerves, and whatever causes my foot to move all these are for Allah the Lord of the worlds. 49

The Morality Of The Holy Prophet

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali (‘a),

*O Ali, if a trotter is presented to me, I will accept it. If I am invited to an arm (of a sheep), I will respond.*50

The Prophet Invokes Allah's Mercy Upon His Successors

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

O Allah, please have mercy on my successors.

When the Holy Prophet (S) repeated this prayer three times, he was asked, 'O Allah's Messenger, who are your successors?' He replied,

They are those who follow my words and practice and then teach them to my people. 51

The Holy Prophet's Divine Pond And Right Of Intercession

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Whoever does not believe in the existence of my pond, then may Allah never let him approach my pond. Whoever does not believe in my right of intercession, then may Allah never grant him my intercession. Verily, my intercession is exclusively for my people who have committed major sins. As for the good-doers, there is no objection to them. 52

The Holy Prophet Prays For The Sick

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

When he invoked health upon a sick person, Allah's Messenger (S) would say these words:

O Lord of humankind, please remove the harm. Please heal, for You are the Healer. There is no remedy except Yours, since your remedy removes all maladies. 53

Guaranteeing The Holy Prophet's Debts

One day, the Holy Prophet (S) said to his companions,

Which one of you will guarantee the settlement of my debts and fulfill my promises, and he will be with me in Paradise?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

'*I will.*'54

The Prophet's Last Words

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that the last words of the Holy Prophet were these:

Abide by Prayer. Abide by Prayer. Fear Allah with regard to (how you treat) your slaves. 55

The Closest To The Holy Prophet

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Verily, the closest of all of you to me in the tomorrow and the most deserving of my intercession are the most truthful amongst you, the most faithful in giving back trusts to their owners, the most well-mannered, and the most beloved by people. 56

The Remotest To The Holy Prophet

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Whoever is not characterized by three traits belongs to neither Allah the Almighty and All-majestic nor me.

‘O Allah’s Messenger,’ they asked, ‘What are these three traits?’

He (S) answered,

They are forbearance by which one refutes the annoyance of the edgy ones, nobility of character by which one coexists with people, and godliness by which one refrains from acting acts of disobedience to Allah the Almighty and All-majestic. 57

Forging Lies Against The Holy Prophet

Imam Ali (‘a) has reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Do not forge lies against me, for whoever forges a lie against me will definitely be in Hellfire. 58

Twelve Imams

Imam Ali (‘a) has reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

After me, the Imams are twelve in number. The first of them is you, Ali, and the last is the Rising Imam (Al-Qa'im) at whose hands Allah exalted be His mention shall conquer the east and the west of the earth. 59

Imam Al-Mahdi

Imam Ali (‘a) has reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Even if one day from the duration of this world remains, Allah the Almighty and All-majestic shall send a man from us to fill in it (i.e. the earth) with justice in the same way as it will have been filled with injustice. 60

Al-Mahdi Belongs To The Prophet’s Household

Imam Ali (‘a) has reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Al-Mahdi is from us, the Ahl Al-Bayt. Allah shall prepare his entire affair at a single night. 61

Tasbih Al-Zahra'

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

Fatimah (‘a) once suffered the thickness of the skin of her hands because of frequent grinding. We thus came to Allah’s Messenger (S) and I spoke, ‘O Allah’s Messenger! Fatimah is complaining about the thickness of the skin of her hands because of frequent grinding. She therefore beseeches you to find her a servant.’

The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

‘May I guide you to what is better than having a servant?’

He (S) thus instructed us that before we go to sleep, we should repeat the statement of glorifying Allah (i.e. Tasbih : saying, ‘subhana allahi ‘) thirty four times, repeat the statement of praising Allah (i.e. Tahmid : saying, ‘Alhamdu lillahi ‘) thirty-three times, and repeat the statement of professing Allah to be the Most Great (i.e. Takbir : saying, ‘Allahu-akbar ‘) thirty-three times. 62

The Virtue Of ‘Ammar

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

One day, ‘Ammar ibn Yasir asked permission to visit Allah’s Messenger (S), who permitted him to come. When ‘Ammar came, Allah’s Messenger (S) said to him, Welcome to the pure and purified one. 63

Likewise, ‘Ammar ibn Yasir once visited Imam Ali (‘a), who said to him, Welcome to the pure and purified one. I have heard Allah’s Messenger (S) saying,

‘Ammar is full of faith from top to bottom. 64

The Virtue Of Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said that Allah’s Messenger (S), once, ordered Abdullah ibn Mas’ud to climb a tree and bring him something. Once Abdullah did, the Companions looked at the thinness of his leg and laughed. Hence, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

What are you laughing at? Verily, the leg of Abdullah in the Scale shall be heavier than Mount Uhud. 65

Mary And Khadijah

Imam Ali (‘a) reported that he heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying,

The best of the women of Paradise is Mary the daughter of ‘Imran, and the best of the women of Paradise is also Khadijah. 66

Prophet Moses Talks To Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

When (Prophet) Moses the son of 'Imran talked to his Lord confidentially, he said, 'O Lord! Are You far away from me, so that I may call at You in a loud voice, or are You close to me and I can speak to You in a low voice?'

The Honorable and Exalted God revealed to him, 'I accompany whoever remembers Me.' Then, Moses said, 'O Lord! There are situations I am in which I consider You to be too High and Noble to be remembered.' God said, 'O Moses, remember Me in all situations.' 67

Almighty Allah With One Of His Prophets

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

In one of His revelations, Allah the Almighty and All-majestic revealed to one of His prophets, saying,

By My Almightiness and Majesty, I will most surely cut off the hope of every one who hopes for one other than Me by means of despair. I will also attire him with the dress of humility in the Fire, and I will set him apart from My relief and favors.

How can My servant hope for one other than Me when ordeals afflict him, while the relief from all ordeals is in My Hand alone?

Does he look forward to other than Me while I alone am the Self-Sufficient and the All-Magnanimous? In My hands lie the keys of all doors, which are all closed, while My door alone is open for him who beseeches Me.

Has he not known that whenever a calamity dilutes him, none save Me has the ability to remove it?

Why then can I see him, carrying his hope, alienated from Me?

Many a time have I given him out of My magnanimity and generosity although he has not besought me for it. Nevertheless, he turned away from Me, did not beseech Me, and, instead, asked someone else in his calamity.

I am Allah; I take the initiative in granting (favors) before I am besought.

When I am besought, will I not respond? Nay! Are all magnanimity and all nobility not Mine alone?

Are the world and the Hereafter not Mine alone?

Even if the inhabitants of seven skies and the seven layers of the earth beseech Me altogether and I will then give each one of them what he needed, this shall never decrease My kingdom even in the amount of a wing of a bug.

How can a kingdom that I supervise be decreased? How then miserable he who disobey Me and does not take Me in consideration is! 68

Almighty Allah's Revelation To Prophet David

Imam Ali ('a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Almighty Allah revealed these words to Prophet David:

The similitude of this world is the same as the similitude of a carcass upon which dogs gathered to pull here and there. Do you like to be a dog, just like they are, to pull with them? O David, having delicious food, putting on soft clothes, having good reputation among people; and winning Paradise in the Hereafter can never be joined together. 69

Total Description Of Islam

Khallas ibn 'Umar related the following:

We were sitting with Ali ibn Abi Talib when a man from the tribe of Khuza'ah came to him and asked, 'O Amir Al-Mu'minin! Have you ever heard Allah's Messenger (S) describing Islam?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered:

Yes, I have heard Allah's Messenger (S) saying,

Islam has been founded on four pillars: Patience, certitude, hard work for the cause of Allah, and justice. Patience therein has four branches: Nostalgia, fear, restraint, and vigilance. One who has a longing for paradise forgets the worldly desires. One who has fear of Hellfire abstains from unlawful things. One who exercises restraint in worldly matters, the worldly hardships become easier for him, and one who is vigilant of death hastens to doing righteous deeds.

Certitude therein is also of four branches. They consist of sharp understanding, proper application of wisdom, deriving useful lessons (from previous actions), and knowledge of the traditions of the people of the past. One who possesses sharp understanding recognizes the matters of wisdom. One who applies wisdom properly recognizes the good lessons, one who recognizes the good lessons recognizes the traditions, and one who recognizes traditions is like the one who has lived with the people of the past and has found proper and firm guidance. He has seen those who found salvation and by what means they found. He has also seen those who were destroyed and things that destroyed them. Allah destroys only those who disobey Him and grants redemption for one who acts obediently to His commands.

Justice therein is also of four branches. It is a matter of deep understanding, a huge body of knowledge, the bloom of wisdom, and the garden of forbearance. One who has deep understanding has the ability to interpret all knowledge. One who has a huge body of knowledge knows the ways of wisdom, and one who is forbearing is not an extremist in his decrees and he lives among the people with a good name.

Hard work for the cause of Allah therein is also of four branches. They consist of helping others to perform their duties and to stay away from

that which is prohibited, speaking the truth whenever needed, and shunning sins and sinners. One who helps others to perform their duties has supported the believers.

One who helps others stop sinning has humiliated the hypocrites and has thwarted their wicked plans. One who speaks the truth at the right time will stand in the winning side. One who shuns the sinners has avoided Allah's wrath. One who becomes angry for the sake of Allah will find Allah angry for him. Such is belief, its pillars and branches. 70

Elements Of Islam

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Allah created Islam and made for it a backyard and front yard, a light, a fortress, and supporter. Its backyard and front yard are the Holy Quran. Wisdom is its light. Lawfulness is its fortress. My Household, our Partisans (Shi'ah), and I are its supporters. You must love my Household, their followers, and their supporters.

When I was taken to the skies above the earth, Archangel Gabriel introduced me to its inhabitants. Allah entrusted the love for me, my Household, and their followers to the hearts of the angels. It is thust trusted with them until the Judgment Day.

Then I was brought down to the earth and he introduced me to the inhabitants of it. Allah entrusted the love for me, my Household, and their followers to the hearts of the believers of my people. They will keep my trust and the trust of my Household until the Judgment Day.

One must know that if a man of my people worships Allah the Most Majestic and Most Holy his entire lifetime and then meet Allahs the Most Majestic and Most Holy while hating my Household and my followers, Allah will not open his chest for anything but hypocrisy.(2) 71

Islamic Taxes

Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiyyah, Imam Ali's son, reported that he heard his father quoting the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Verily, Almighty Allah has decided such a sufficient share for the poor to be taken from the funds of the rich that it meets all their needs. If the rich then deprive the poor of their shares, causing them to starve, find nothing to wear, or feel tired, then Allah will punish the rich very intensely and will chastise them unbearably. 72

Types Of Jihad

Imam Ali ('a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

Jihad is of four types: (1) enjoining the right, (2) forbidding the wrong, (3) honesty in situations of steadfastness, and (4) showing animosity to the sinful. 73

Self-strife

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said, 'On seeing the returning armies from the battlefront, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

Blessed are those who have performed the minor jihad, and have yet to perform the major one.

When asked what the major jihad is, the Holy Prophet (S) replied,

The major jihad is self-strife. 74

Jihad in seditious matters

The Messenger of Allah (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali ('a),

O Ali, verily, Allah the All-exalted has prescribed on the faithful believers to practice jihad when seditious matters will be aroused after my departure just as He has prescribed on them to struggle against the polytheists with me.

Imam Ali ('a) asked,

'O Allah's Messenger, what is the sedition in which we are prescribed to practice jihad?'

The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

This sedition occurs when some people violate my practices and defame my religion while they (yet verbally) profess that there is no god but Allah and that I am the messenger of Allah.

Imam Ali ('a) asked,

'If they bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that you are the messenger of Allah, then on which basis will we fight against them?

The Holy Prophet (S) replied,

You will fight against them because they will have innovated false matters in the religion, turned away from my instructions, and deemed lawful the bloodshed of my Progeny. 75

Choosing For Peace

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

After my departure, there shall be discrepancy or innovation of new things. As much as you can, try to choose for peace. 76

Strategic Trickery In War

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said more than once,

‘Birds snatching me away is more favorable to me than fabricating false sayings against the Messenger of Allah (S). I did hear the Messenger of Allah (S) saying on that day of the Battle of the Ditch, War is based on strategic trickery. 77

Patience

Imam Ali (‘a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

The position of patience to faith is as same as the position of the head to the body. 78

Signs Of The True Steadfast

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

The sign of the true steadfast lies in three acts: (1) he is never lazy, (2) he is never bored, and (3) he never complains against the Almighty and All-majestic Lord. If he feels lazy, then he will forfeit his duties (towards the Lord). If he feels bored, he will fail to thank (the Lord) properly. If he complains against the Lord, he will then have disobeyed Him. 79

This World; A Prison For The Believers

In his instructive will to Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

O Ali, this world is a prison for the faithful believer and a paradise for the nonbeliever.

O Ali, Allah has revealed to this world, saying: Serve whoever serves Me, and tire whomever serves you.

O Ali, had this world been worth the wing of a fly in the sight of Him,

Allah would not have allowed the disbelievers to drink even a drop of water from it.

O Ali, on the Resurrection Day, all individuals from the past and the last generations will wish if they were not given any pleasure in this world except the amount that kept them alive. 80

Ailment Of The Faithful Believer

Imam Ali ('a) reported that the Holy Prophet (S) had said to him,

O Ali, the moaning of a faithful believer is regarded as glorification of Allah, his wailing is regarded as professing that there is no god save Allah, his being bedridden because of illness is regarded as sort of worship, and his turning over from one side to another is regarded as struggle in the cause of Allah. If he is then restored to health, he will walk among people exempted from all of his sins. 81

Imam Ali ('a) likewise reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

The moaning of the faithful believer is recorded for him; if he shows patience, then his moaning will be added to his rewards for doing good deeds, but if his moaning was due to his impatience and anxiety, then he will be free of gaining any reward. 82

Duties Of Muslims Towards Each Other

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Six kind acts are incumbent upon a Muslim towards his brother-in-faith: (1) to greet him whenever he meets him, (2) to visit him when he is ailed, (3) to bless him when he sneezes, 83 (4) to attend his funeral when he passes away, (5) to respond to him when he invites him, and (6) to love for him whatever he loves for himself and to hate for him whatever he hates for himself. 84

Imam Ali ('a) also reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

There are thirty duties incumbent upon a Muslim towards his brother-in- faith; and none is exempted from these duties except by carrying them out or there is a justifiable reason: he must forgive his (i.e. brother-in-faith) slips, have mercy on him when he is saddened, cover up his defects, excuse his blunders, accept his apologies, defend him when he is backbitten, continue to give him advices, maintain his friendship with him, preserve his inviolabilities, visit him when he is ailed, attend his funeral when he passes away, respond to his invitations, receive his gifts, make up for his donations, thank him when he does him a favor, support him excellently, guard his wife, help him settle his needs, intercede for him in needs, bless him when he sneezes, guide him when he or one of his things are lost, greet him back, use nice language with him, treat his belongings with kindness, give credence when he takes an oath, befriend his friends, refrain from incurring animosity of him, and back him when he is right or wrong.

To back him when he is wrong means that he must deter him from wronging others. To back him when he is right means to help him retrieve his dues.

He must also avoid forsaking him and avoid disappointing him. He must also love for him whatever good item he loves for himself and hate that an evil, which he does not want for himself, to afflict him. 85

Financial Duties

Imam Ali ('a) reported that the Holy Prophet (S) was once asked, 'Is there any other duty in one's money except the zakat rate (i.e.

poor-rate)?'

He (S) answered,

Yes, there is. It is to act kindly towards one's relatives when they desert you and to build good relations with the Muslim neighbors. Verily, whoever spends a night satiated while his Muslim neighbor is hungry, has not believed in me. Archangel Gabriel kept on instructing me to create strong ties with the neighbors until I thought that he would decide a share of the inheritance to the neighbors. 86

Legally-Gotten Earnings

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Verily, Allah the All-exalted likes to see His servant tire out himself in seeking lawful earnings. 87

Prayers That Are Never Rejected

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali ('a),

O Ali, the prayers of four classes of people are never rejected: just rulers, fathers when they pray for their sons, people who privately pray for their brethren, and the oppressed. The Majestic and Glorified God says, 'I swear by My Glory and Majesty that I will take your revenge (referring to the oppressed) even if it takes long time. 88

Prayer At Putting On Clothes

Imam Ali ('a) came to a boy and purchased a shirt with three dirhams. When he put it on, he ('a) uttered this prayer:

All praise be to Allah Who has provided me with clothing of beauty through which I beautify myself among people and cover up my private parts.

When he was asked whether these words were his own composition or were heard from the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali ('a) answered that he had heard them from the Holy Prophet (S) who used to say them whenever he put on a new clothing.89

Building A Mosque

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Whoever builds a mosque, Almighty Allah will build for him a house in Paradise. 90

Sitting In One's Prayer-Place

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that he heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying,

Whoever performs the Dawn Prayer and then sits in his prayer-place, the angels will bless him. The blessing of the angels means that they pray Allah for him, saying: O Allah, please forgive him. O Allah, please have mercy on him.

Likewise, whoever waits for the time of a prayer, the angels will bless him. The blessing of the angels means that they pray Allah for him, saying: O Allah, please forgive him. O Allah, please have mercy on him. 91

The Poor; The Friends Of Allah

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

The poor are Allah's friends. The sick are Allah's beloveds. So, whoever dies after declaring repentance, will be awarded Paradise. Repent to Allah and never despair. Verily, the door to repentance is open from the side of the sunset and it is never blocked until the sun rises from it. 92

The Homeless

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

I will not give you (from the allowances) and leave the homeless 93 *starving.* 94

Lofty Places In Paradise

Imam Ali ('a) reported that the Holy Prophet (S) had said,

Verily, there are chambers in Paradise whose outward can be seen from their inward and inward from their outward. Living in these chambers are people from my community who use nice wording, serve (the poor) with food, spread greetings, and pray at night when others are asleep.

Imam Ali ('a) asked, 'O Allah's Messenger, which one of your community can do all these?'

The Holy Prophet (S) replied,

O Ali, do you know what nice wording indicates? It indicates those who, in mornings and evenings, repeat ten times these (doxological) words: subhanaallahiwalhamdulillahi walailahaillaallahuwallahuakbaru (All glory be to Allah, all praise be to Allah, there is no god but Allah, and Allah is the Most Great).

To serve (the poor) with food stands for spending on one's dependents (generously).

To offer prayers at night while the others are sleep means: whoever performs the Sunset and Evening Prayers and then performs the Dawn Prayer at mosque, is considered as having spent the whole night in devotional acts.

To spread greetings means not to abstain from greeting any one of the Muslims. 95

Abstinence From Worldly Pleasures

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Whoever abstains from running after worldly pleasures, Allah will learn him without need for learning tools, will guide him without need for guiding means, will make him insightful, and will remove blindness from him. 96

Nobilities Of Character

Imam Al-Husayn ('a) reported on the authority of his father ('a) who said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying,

I have been sent (as a prophet) to disseminate the nobilities and decencies of character. 97

Well Mannerism

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that he heard Allah's Messenger (S) saying,

Verily, you will not be able to contain all people by your fortunes; therefore, contain them by your moral standards. 98

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali ('a),

O Ali, may I inform you of the closest to my mannerisms?

'Yes, you may, Allah's Messenger,' said Imam Ali ('a). The Holy Prophet (S) expressed,

The closest to my mannerisms are the most well-mannered, the most self-possessed, the kindest to their relatives, and the fairest in situations of rage and pleasure. 99

Helping People Settle Their Needs

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali ('a),

O Ali, the need (i.e. poverty) is Allah's trust with His creatures. Whoever keeps it secret, Allah grants him a reward equal to that decided for one who prays. However, if he reveals it (i.e. complains about his poverty) to one who is able to help but he does not help, he has them killed him, not with a sword or spears, but has killed him by breaking his heart. 100

The Best Of All People

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali ('a),

O Ali, there are three things; whoever meets Allah the Almighty and All-majestic having carried them out, will be of the noblest of all people. Whoever performs whatever is incumbent upon him will be of the best of worshippers. Whoever abstains from whatever is forbidden for him to do, will be of the most pious of all people. Whoever is content with whatever sustenance Allah has provided for him, will be of the wealthiest of all people.

O Ali, Islam is naked. Modesty is its dress, faithfulness its adornment, good deed its personality, and piety its pillar. 101

Helping The Muslims

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Whoever saves a group of Muslims from fire or flood, will be incumbently in Paradise. 102

Qualities Of True Believers

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have asked the Holy Prophet (S) about the qualities of true believers. The Holy Prophet (S) thus answered,

There are twenty qualities in a believer without which his belief is not complete. Of the qualities of the believing people, O Ali, is their presence in prayer, quick payment of zakat (religious tax or charity), feeding the destitute, placing their hands on the heads of the orphans (to comfort them), cleansing their clothes, and tying up their waists with covering. They are those who do not lie when speaking, do not break their promises, and do not violate their trusts. They tell the truth when they speak up.

At night, they are monks, and they are lions during the day. During the days, they fast, and at nights, they stand up for worship. They do not harm the neighbors and the neighbors do not experience any harm from them. They are those who walk on earth in humble manners, and their steps move to the homes of the widows (to help) and in the processions of funerals. 103

Good-Looking People

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Seek good from the pleasant-looking people, as they are more likely to do good deeds than the mean-looking ones. 104

Building Good Ties With The Relatives

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

One who maintains good relationship with his relatives, if he may have only three years to live, Allah, because of his good relationship with the relatives, will prolong his life up to thirty years.

He (S) then recited this holy Quranic verse:

Allah makes to pass away and establishes what He pleases, and with Him is the basis of the Book. (13:39) 105

Imam Ali ('a) also reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

Whoever is pleased to have his lifetime prolonged and have his sustenance expanded, must then build good relationship with his relatives. 106

Equality With The Brothers-In-Faith

In his instructive will to Imam Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

Three conducts cannot be stood by the individuals of this nation: (1) Halving one's funds with the brethren-in-faith, (2) treating people justly in personal issues, and (3) remembering Almighty Allah under all circumstances. To remember Almighty Allah does not mean to utter such statements of praise of Him like 'Glory be to Allah', 'praise be to Allah', 'there is no god save Allah', and 'Allah is the Most Great'; rather, it means to fear Him when coming to commit a forbidden act. 107

Endearing Oneself To People

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

The topmost of intelligence, after having faith in Allah, is the endearment to people. 108

Man is grouped with those whom he loves

Imam Ali (‘a) related that a man said to the Holy Prophet (S),

‘It happens that one loves a certain people but he cannot imitate their deeds.’

The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

Man is grouped with those whom he loves. 109

Noble Characters

In his instructive will to Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

O Ali, the faith of one who has the following seven characteristics is perfect and the gates of Paradise shall open up for him: (1) to perform the (ritual) ablution properly, (2) to perform the prayers excellently; (3) to pay the alms-tax from one’s properties, (4) to stop one’s anger from people, (5) to control one’s tongue, (6) to implore Allah’s forgiveness for the sins, and (7) to act sincerely towards one’s family members. 110

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Whoever enjoys four qualities in this world, will have won the wealth of this world and the other world and will have attained his share completely from both of them: (1) godliness that protects from violating them prohibitions of Allah, (2) nobility of character through which he lives

among people, (3) clemency by which he repels the precipitancy of the impatient people, and (4) a righteous wife that helps him run properly the affairs of this world and the other world. 111

The Best Qualities

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

The best worshipper of all people is he who carries out the religious duties excellently.

The most generous of all people is he who defrays the poor-rate from his funds.

The most ascetic of all people is he who refrains from committing the prohibitions.

The most God-fearing of all people is he who says the truth, be it for his good or against it.

The fairest of all people is he who loves for people what he loves for himself and hates for them what he hates for himself.

The most courteous of all people is he who evokes death more than everybody else does.

The happiest of all people is he who is under the dust after he, having been saved from punishment, is expecting the reward.

The most inattentive of all people is he who does not learn a lesson from the vicissitudes of time.

The worthiest of all people is he who does not make any worth for this world.

The most knowledgeable of all people is he who adds the knowledge of people to his own knowledge.

The bravest of all people is he who overcomes his personal whims.

The most valuable of all people is he who has more familiarity with all affairs than everybody else does.

The most valueless of all people is he who has less familiarity with the affairs than everybody else does.

He who enjoys the least pleasure among all people is the one who envies them.

The most uncomfortable of all people is the stingy.

The stingiest of all people is he who acts tightfistedly with regard to his duties towards Allah the Almighty and All-majestic.

The worthiest of following the truth is the one who recognizes it better than all others do.

The most disrespected of all people is the sinful. The most unfaithful are the kings.

The biggest friendless ones are the rulers. The poorest of all people are the greedy.

The richest of all people are those who are free from avidity. The best faithful of all people are the most well-mannered. The noblest of all people are the most pious.

The most appreciated of all people are those who do not interfere themselves in what may not concern them.

The most devout of all people are those who abandon dispute, even if they are right.

The weakest in personality are those accustomed to telling lies. The unhappiest of all people are the rulers.

The most abhorrent of all people are the arrogant.

The most hard-working of all people are those who abandon sinning. The wisest of all people are those who flee from the ignorant ones.

The most contended of all people are those who associate with the noble people.

The most sagacious of all people are those who treat others with best means of courtesy.

The most accused are those who sit with the untrustworthy people.

The most insolent of all people are those who kill or beat other than their killers or beaters.

The worthiest of pardoning are the most capable of punishing.

Those who are most expected to commit sins are the foolish backbiters. The lowliest of all people are those who humiliate the others.

The most resolute of all people are those who suppress their rage most.

The most righteous of all people are those who make peace between people.

The best of all people are those who make more benefits for people. 112

Enjoining The Right

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Those who enjoin the right, forbid the wrong, guide to a righteous deed, and give proper advice are partners in the reward. Likewise, those who enjoin evil, guide to a spiteful act, or give evil advice are partner in the punishment. 113

Doing A Favor Perfectly

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying,

To do a favor perfectly is better than setting to do it. 114

Perfect Chivalry

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying,

As for him who treats people with fairness, tells them the truth only, and fulfills his promises to them, it is then forbidden to backbite him, his manliness is perfect, his decency is apparent, and it is obligatory to regard him as true brother. 115

Love And Hatred

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying,

Have love for your friend up to a limit, for it is possible that he turns into your enemy one day; and hate your enemy up to a limit, for it is possible that he turns into your friend one day. 116

Forbearance

Imam Ali (‘a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Forbearance promotes to the rank of those who persistently observe fasting and spend their nights with acts of worship. 117

Arranging Matters In Disputes

Imam Ali (‘a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

To arrange matters in disputes is better than general prayers and fasting. 118

Treating The Unkind With Kindness

Imam Ali (‘a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Regard good relationship with those who have ruptured their relationships with you, treat with kindness those who have treated you unkindly, and say the truth even if it may cause you blameworthy result. 119

Pardoning The Wrongdoers

Imam Ali (‘a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

On the Resurrection Day, a caller from the center of the Divine Throne will cry out, ‘Let those whose rewards have been purely relegated to Allah stand up.’ Then, none will stand up except those who have pardoned their brethren-in-faith. 120

Helping In Charitable Acts

Imam Ali (‘a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

May Allah have mercy upon whoever helps his parents do good deeds. May Allah have mercy upon whoever helps his children do good deeds. May Allah have mercy on whoever helps his neighbors do good deeds. May Allah have mercy on whoever helps his friends do good deeds. May Allah have mercy on whoever helps his companions do good deeds. May Allah have mercy on whoever helps his ruler do good deeds. 121

Exploitation Of Four Things

In his instructive will to Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) has said,

O Ali, exploit four things before the falling of four (bad consequences): exploit your youth before the falling of your old age, exploit your health before the coming of your illness, exploit your richness before the falling of your poverty, and exploit your lifetime before the coming of your death. 122

Kindness To The Orphans And The Weak

In his instructive will to Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) has said,

O Ali, whoever enjoys the following four features, Almighty Allah shall build for him a house in Paradise: (1) providing a shelter for an orphan, (2) having mercy on the weak, (3) showing compassion to the parents, and (4) treating the servants leniently.

O Ali, Paradise shall be incumbently decided for him who meets all the expenses of an orphan from his own wealth until he makes him financially independent.

O Ali, whoever passes his hand over the head of an orphan out of feeling sympathy with him, Almighty Allah, on the Resurrection Day, shall grant him (a piece of) light for each single hair (of the orphan’s head). 123

Giving Good Advice

Imam Ali (‘a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

A faithful believer will be kept enjoying a large vicinity of religiousness as long as he gives his brethren-in-faith good advices. If he deviates from

so, he will be divested of Divine direction. 124

The Three Rescuers

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali ('a),

O Ali, three matters do rescue: (1) fear of Allah covertly and overtly, (2) economization in richness and poverty, and (3) saying the fair word in states of satisfaction and rage. 125

Wronging The Helpless

Imam Ali ('a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

Allah the Almighty and All-majestic says: My wrath is so intense with those who wrong the people who have no aide save Me. 126

Trustworthiness

Imam Ali ('a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

Trustworthiness brings about (much) sustenance, while treachery bring about poverty. 127

Jealousy

Imam Ali ('a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

I am ardently jealous, but Allah the Almighty and All-majestic is more jealous than I am. Verily, Allah the All-exalted loves more the jealous servants of Him. 128

Adequate Sustenance

Imam Ali (‘a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

When Allah the All-exalted loves a servant of Him, He gives him the minimum amount of sustenance (that is necessary to support life). 129

The Reward For Almsgiving

Imam Ali (‘a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

Every act of kindness is considered almsgiving, be it to a rich or a poor person. So, give alms, even if they are as insignificant as a half of a date. Guard yourselves against Hellfire even through a half of a date. Verily, Allah the Almighty and All-majestic nurtures the alms for its doer as same as you nurture your foal or young camel until He will pay it back to its doer on the Resurrection Day and then it will be as vast as a big mountain. 130

The Little Worldly Profit Is Better Than The Much

Imam Ali (‘a) quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

What is sufficiently little is better than what is distractively much. 131

Word Of The Faithful Believer

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said that he heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying,

A word given by a true believer is non-expiable vow. 132

Leaving The Unconcerned

Imam Ali (‘a) quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

One of the signs of knowledgeability is to speak very little in the unconcerned matters. 133

Wise Word

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that he heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying,

A wise saying is a lost article of the believer. Wherever he finds it, he is the worthiest of it (i.e. he should apply its meaning to himself before others). 134

Acts Driving Satan Away

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that the Messenger of Allah (S) was once asked, 'What is the thing that may drive Satan away from us?'

Answering, he (S) said,

Observance of fasting blackens the face of Satan, almsgiving breaks his back, bearing love for others for the sake of Allah the All-exalted and persistence on righteous deeds cut off his roots, and imploring Allah's forgiveness cuts off his aorta. 135

Imploring God's Forgiveness For The Polytheist Parents

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

I heard a man imploring God's forgiveness for his parents who were polytheists. I thus said to him, 'Is it acceptable for one to implore God's forgiveness for his polytheist fathers?'

The man answered, 'Did (Prophet) Abraham not implore God's forgiveness for his polytheist father?'

When I conveyed this to the Holy Prophet (S), the following holy verse was revealed:

It is not for the Prophet and those who believe to pray for the forgiveness of idolaters even though they may be near of kin to them after it had become clear that they are people of Hellfire. (9:113) 136

Relieving From Crises

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali ('a),

O Ali, whenever you face a matter that frightens you, you may say: O Allah, (I beseech You) in the name of Muhammad and his Household, please relieve me from my fear. 137

What To Say To A Sneezer

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

When one of you sneezes, he should say, 'Alhamdu lillahi 'Ala kulli halin (Praise be to Allah for each and every situation).' He must then be answered by these words: 'yarhamukallahu (Allah may have mercy upon you),' and the sneezer then replies with the statement of 'yahdikumullahu wayuslihubalakum(May Allah guide you and improve your condition).' 138

Abstinence From Lusts

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Blessed are those who abstain from a current lust in order to obtain a promised one that they have not seen yet. 139

Forbiddance Of Obscene Language

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

As for every obscene, indecent, and shameless individual who does not care for his speech or for what is said to him, Almighty Allah will ban him from being in Paradise. If you search for the family of such individuals, you will find them bastards or semi-sons of devils.

Some of the attendants asked, 'O Allah's Messenger, are there devils among people?'

The Holy Prophet (S) answered

There are devils among people. Do you not deduce this fact from this holy verse: 'And share with them (O Satan) in wealth and children?' 140

Joking And Telling Untruths

In his instructive will to Imam Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

O Ali, do not joke; lest your brilliance will fade away. Do not tell lies; lest, your brightness will fade away.

Beware of two characteristics: boredom and laziness. If you are bored, then you will not tolerate the truth. If you are lazy, you will carry out your duties.

O Ali, whoever is controlled by boredom, rest will depart from him. 141

Discourtesy

In his instructive will to Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

There is repentance for each sin except discourtesy, because whenever a discourteous person leaves a sin, he will fall in another. 142

Imam Ali (‘a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

Discourtesy spoils deeds in the same way as vinegar does to honey. 143

The Wickedest Of Sll People

In his instructive will to Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

O Ali, the best kind of jihad is to begin your day without having any intention to wrong anyone.

O Ali, he whom people try to avoid his tongue (i.e. impudent language) shall be one of the inhabitants of Hellfire.

O Ali, the wickedest of all people is the one whom people honor for safeguarding themselves from his obscene language and from the harm of his wickedness.

O Ali, the evilest of all people is he who sells his otherworld with this world, and even more evil than that is one who sells his otherworld with the world of one other than him. 144

On another occasion, the Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam Ali (‘a),

O Ali, may I inform you of the evilest of all people?

Imam Ali (‘a) answered, *‘Yes, you may.’*

The Holy Prophet (S) said,

The evilest of all people is he who never forgives and never overlooks. May I inform of those who are worse than those people are?

Imam Ali ('a) said, '*Yes, you may.*'

The Holy Prophet (S) said,

They are those whose evil is not secured and good is not expected from them. 145

Frowning In The Face Of The Brethren-In-Faith

Imam Ali ('a) quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Verily, Allah hates those who frown in the faces of their brethren-in-faith. 146

The Two-Faced

Imam Ali ('a) reported that the Holy Prophet (S), once, said in one of his speeches,

Evil is the servant (of Allah) who has two faces; he welcomes in one face and alienates in the other. If his Muslim brother attains a good thing, he envies him, but if a bad thing afflicts him, he disappoints him.

Evil is the servant who is like this. The beginning of him was semen and the end of him is corpse. Between these edges, he does not know what will affect him.

Evil is the servant who, although he has been created to serve Allah, is distracted by the transitory world from the final one and his end result will be misery.

Evil is the servant who behaves haughtily and proudly, forgetting the All- great and All-high Lord.

Evil is the servant who acts insolently and oppressively, forgetting the Omnipotent and Most High Lord.

Evil is the servant who is subjected to a whim that misleads him and a self that leads him to humiliation.

Evil is the servant whose greed leads him to filth. 147

Sins Of Immediate Punishment

Imam Ali ('a) quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

The punishment for three sins is immediate and not postponed to the hereafter: filial impiety, oppression against people, and ingratitude. 148

Deserter Of Prayers

In his instructive will to Imam Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

Those who have deserted performing the prayers will plead for return to the worldly life. To this meaning has Allah the All-exalted referred by saying 'Until, when death comes unto one of them, he says:

My Lord! Send me back. (23:99)' 149

The Back-Breaking Things

In his instructive will to Imam Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

O Ali, four issues are back-breaking: a leader who is obeyed while he dis-obeys Allah, a wife who is unfaithful to her husband while he is caring for her, poverty which the poor cannot overcome, and a permanently bad neighbor. 150

The Seven Accursed

Imam Ali (‘a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

Allah and all of the prophets whose prayers are sure to be fulfilled have cursed seven groups of people. They are: (1) those who distort the Book of Allah, (2) those who deny the Divine destiny, (3) those who misrepresent the tradition of Allah’s Messenger, (4) those who allow what has been forbidden regarding my Household, (5) those who come to power by force so as to debase those who are endeared by Allah and to endear those who are debased by Allah, (6) those who consider lawful what the Honorable and Exalted Allah has established to be unlawful, (7) and those who behave extremely arrogantly with those who worship the Honorable the Exalted Allah. 151

The People Of The Acts Of Disobedience To Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

The Messenger of Allah (S) has ordered us to meet the people who are disobedient to Almighty Allah with sullen faces. 152

The Lowly

In his instructive will to Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

O Ali, by Allah (I swear), in the government of the evil rulers, if the lowly people settle in the bottom of a well, Allah the Almighty and Allmajestic will send to them a storm to rise them above the exalted ones. 153

Ingratitude

Imam Ali (‘a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

The swiftest of all sins in punishment is ingratitude (i.e. absence of appreciation). 154

Monopoly

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

The Messenger of Allah (S) has warned against monopoly (i.e. exclusive possession or control of the trade in a commodity). 155

The Destroyers

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Dinar and dirham (i.e. money) have destroyed those who lived before you and they will destroy you, too. 156

Backbiting

In his instructive will to Imam Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

O Ali, whoever's brother-in-faith is backbitten before him and he refrains from supporting him although he can do it, Allah the All-exalted will disappoint him in this world and the other world. 157

Hardheartedness

In his instructive will to Imam Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

O Ali, three matters cause hardheartedness: (1) listening to amusements, (2) seeking after games [i.e. hunting], and (3) stopping at the doors of the rulers. 158

Self-Humiliation

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

A Muslim must not expose himself to humiliation.

The Holy Prophet (S) was asked how one can expose oneself to humiliation. He (S) answered,

Exposing oneself to humiliation is to intrude upon unbearable tribulations. 159

Beggary Of The Rich

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Whoever asks for something from people although he is rich enough to avoid so, will bring to himself more fiery stones of Hellfire.

The Holy Prophet (S) was asked as to which extent one can be rich enough, and he (S) answered,

A rich enough person is one who can provide a dinner for himself. 160

Rage And Self-Control

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

The strongest of all of you is one who controls oneself in rage, and the most forbearing of all of you is one who pardons although he has the power to punish. 161

Hastening

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Do not postpone these three things: (1) prayers when their times come, (2) funerals when they are prepared, and (3) mature girls when a well-qualified man asks for their hands. 162

Transgression And Envy

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Iblis (i.e. Satan) says to his hosts: Disperse transgression and envy among the children of Adam (i.e. human beings), because these two are equal to atheism in the sight of Allah. 163

Belittlement Of Religion

Imam Ali (‘a) reported that he heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying,

I fear for you belittlement of religious affairs, retailing judgments, rupture of relations with the relatives, using the Quran as songs, and making one who is not the best of you all in the religious knowledge as your leader. 164

Abandonment Of Faith

Imam Ali (‘a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said,

In the last of time, a people will appear who recite the Quran but it does not exceed their collarbones. They will abandon the faith of Islam as

swiftly as an arrow leaves the bow. To fight against them is a duty that is incumbent upon every Muslim. 165

Seeking The Help Of Other Than Almighty Allah

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Allah the Almighty says: As for any creature who seeks the help of one of My creatures other than Me, I will certainly take away from him the means in the heavens and the earth. I shall not give him anything that he may ask from Me, and I shall not respond to him whenever he calls Me.

As for any created being that seeks the help of Me but not of any of My creatures, I will certainly establish the heavens and the earth as a means of providing for his sustenance. I will grant him whatever he asks for from Me, I will respond to him when he calls Me, and I will forgive him when he implores Me for forgiveness. 166

The Worthy Of Insult

In his instructive will to Imam Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

O Ali, the following eight categories of people have no one but themselves to blame if they are insulted: (1) those who attend a banquet without being invited, (2) those guests who frequently give orders to their hosts, (3) those who expect goodness from their enemies, (4) those who seek favors from lowly people, (5) those who interfere in other people's private affairs without being asked to do so, (6) those who mock at rulers, (7) those who sit in a position which they do not deserve, and (8) those who converse with people who do not listen to them. 167

The Baseless Zeal Of Jahiliyyah

In his instructive will to Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

O Ali, through Islam, Allah the All-blessed and All-exalted has removed the baseless zeal of the pre-Islamic era (i.e. Jahiliyyah) and the boasting with forefathers. Behold! All human beings go back to Adam and Adam was created of dust. The most honorable of them in the sight of Allah is the most pious. 168

Adorning Oneself Before People

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Whoever adorns himself in the presence of others with what Allah likes but challenges Allah in private by acts that Allah dislikes, will meet the wrath and rancor of Allah. 169

The Punishment Of The Intoxicants-Addicted

Imam Ali (‘a) has said that the Holy Prophet (S) said to him,

I swear by Allah and I call Him to be the witness that (Archangel) Gabriel said to me: O Muhammad, the addicted to intoxicants is as same as the worshipper of idols. 170

Praiseworthy Traits And Blameworthy Traits

In his instructive will to Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

O Ali, I warn you against three gross traits: envy, greed, and telling untruths.

O Ali, in this world, a faithful believer becomes happy at three situations: meeting the brethren-in-faith, breaking the fast, and worshipping (Allah) at the last hours of night. 171

Deadeners Of Hearts

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (S) said to him,

Association with the following three categories of people deadens hearts: (1) sitting with scoundrels, (2) talking to women, and (3) sitting with the rich. 172

Peculiarities Of The Holy Prophet

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

I have been given things that no other prophet had' I have been given victory by means of horror (in the hearts of the enemies), I have been given the keys to the treasures of the earth, I have been given the name Ahmad (i.e. praiseworthy), the dust has been made pure for me, and my community has been made the best of all communities. 173

Self-Protection

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

One who does not practice taqiyah (i.e. self-protection) is faithless. 174

Legality Of Temporary Marriage

It is reported that Imam Ali (‘a), at a place called ‘Usfan, met with ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan who had deemed prohibited the temporary marriage, and said to him,

What for are you deeming prohibited a matter that Allah’s Messenger has practiced? 175

Mina

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

One day, the Messenger of Allah (S) came to the place of slaughtering at Mina and said, ‘This is the slaughtering place, although Mina entirely can acceptably be a place of slaughtering.’ 176

The Zakat Tax

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

The tax of whatever is irrigated by raindrops is one-tenth, and the tax of whatever is irrigated by buckets and waterwheels is half a one-tenth. 177

The Alms-Given Camels

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

One day, a group of camels that were dedicated to alms passed by the Messenger of Allah (S), who grasped the hairs of one of the camels and said, ‘I am not worthier than any other Muslim person to have even this amount of these camels.’ 178

Sheep And Planting

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Stick to sheep-breeding and crop growing, for they come with benefit and go with benefit. 179

Accursed People

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

May Allah curse those who offer a slaughtered animal for any other purpose than (seeking nearness to) Almighty Allah!

May Allah curse those who are loyal to other than their true leaders!
May Allah curse those who change the signs of the earth!

May Allah curse those who act impiously towards their parents! 180

Unacceptable Immolations

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

The Messenger of Allah (S) warned against immolating (i.e. offering in sacrifice) a muqabilah (i.e. an animal that a front part of it ear is cut off and let hanged), a mudabirah (i.e. an animal that a back part of its ear is cut off and let hanged), a sharqa' (i.e. an animal whose ear is cut into two pieces), a kharqa' (i.e. an animal in whose ear there is a round hole), and a jad ‘a'(i.e. an animal whose ear, nose, or lip is cut off). 181

The Imam (‘a) is also reported to have said,

The Messenger of Allah (S) warned against immolating an animal whose horn is broken or whose ear is split.182

The Three Exempted

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Three categories of people are released from responsibility: (1) the asleep until they wake up, (2) the insane until their recover reason, and (3) the immature until they attain maturity. 183

Immunity Against Drowning

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

O Ali, to say these words saves the individuals of my community against drowning if they say them when they embark on ships: In the Name of Allah the All-beneficent. ‘And they have not honored Allah with the honor that is due to Him.

The whole earth shall be in His grip on the Resurrection Day and the heavens rolled up in His right hand. Glory be to Him and may He be exalted above what they associate with Him.’ ‘In the name of Allah be its sailing and its anchoring. Most surely, my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful.’ 184

Talking To The Lepers

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Do not take long looks at the lepers. When you have to talk to them, you may put between them and you a distance that is as much as a length of a spear. 185

Pouring Dust Upon The Dead

Imam Ali (‘a) said that he heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying,

Whoever pours dust upon a dead person and says, '(O Allah,) this is on the basis of the belief in You and giving credence to Your Resurrection. This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us, and Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth,' whose does and says so, Allah will grant him a reward for each atom (of dust). 186

Departure From The Lovers

Imam Ali ('a) said that he heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying,

(Archangel) Gabriel said to me: Love whomever you want, for you will eventually depart from him. Do whatever you want, for you will eventually face its consequence. Live how long you wish, for you will eventually die. 187

Pondering Over The Sermons

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

To the highest positions of Heaven, some people preceded others although they did not offer prayers, did not observe fasting, and did not go on the Hajj pilgrimage more than others did; rather, they pondered over the lessons of Almighty Allah so thoughtfully that their hearts felt fear of Him, their souls felt rest with Him, and their limbs frightened of Him. As a result, they exceeded the other creatures in winning the most pleasant standing and the most excellent rank in the sight of people and in the sight of Allah in the Hereafter. 188

The Useless Matters

Within his instructive words to Imam Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

O Ali, four matters go uselessly: to eat after satiety, to light a lamp in the moonlight, to seed in the briny land, and to do favors to the undeserved. 189

Sorts Of Speaking

Imam Ali ('a) reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Speaking is of three categories: one category brings about triumph, another category brings about safety, and the third category brings about paleness. The category that brings about triumph is remembrance of Almighty Allah. The category that brings about safety is to say what Allah likes you to say. The category that brings about paleness is to speak ill of people. 190

Inward And Outward Forms

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

O Ali, every servant (of Almighty Allah) has an inward form and an outward appearance. Whoever sets aright his inward form, Allah will set aright his outward appearance; and whoever spoils his inward form, Almighty Allah will spoil his outward appearance.

Every one has a reputation among the inhabitants of the heavens that is similar to his reputation among the inhabitants of the earth. Hence, when the reputation of one is ill among the inhabitants of the heavens, his reputation among the inhabitants of the earth will be made ill, too. 191

Endearing Oneself To People

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

After believing in Allah the Almighty and All-majestic, the top of reason is to endear oneself to people. 192

Gold And Silk

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

The Messenger of Allah (S) took gold in his right hand and a piece of silk in his left, and said, 'These two are forbidden to the males of my community.' 193

Roses

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

One day, the Messenger of Allah (S) gave me flowers as a present with his both hands. When I brought the flowers near my nose, he said,

Flowers are the chief scent-giving plants of Paradise after myrtle. 194

New Fruits

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Whenever the Holy Prophet (S) saw new fruits, he would kiss and put them on his eyes and mouth. He would then pray to Almighty Allah, saying,

O Allah, just as You have made us see the first of this fruit with good health, so also, please, make us see the last of it with good health. 195

Eating While Ceremonially Impure

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

The Messenger of Allah (S) warned us against eating something while being ceremonially impure. Commenting, he (S) said,

This act brings about poverty. 196

Washing The Entire Body From Ceremonial Impurity

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Whoever leaves a single hair of his body unwashed from ceremonial impurity, will face much chastisement in Hellfire.

Imam Ali commented:

Since then, I never left a single hair on my body unwashed. 197

Urinating Under A Tree

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

The Messenger of Allah (S) warned against urinating under a fruitful tree or on the public way.198

Urinating In Flowing Rivers

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

The Messenger of Allah (S) warned against urinating in flowing rivers.199

Urinating In Standing Position

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

To urinate while standing up is a sign of alienation, unless there is an excuse. 200

Negligence Of Ritual Ablution

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

The prayers of eight categories of people are unacceptable. One of them is one who neglects performing the ritual ablution (i.e. wuzu').

Dyeing

In his instructive will to Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) said,

It is better to spend a single dirham in dyeing than to spend one-thousand dirhams for the sake of Allah, since it has fourteen characteristics. It releases the wind from the ears, improves the sight, softens the nasals, makes your breath smell fresh, strengthens the gums, eliminates weakness, lessens s 201 *atanic insinuations, gladdens the angels, delivers glad tidings to the believers, enrages the disbelievers, adorns, gives scent, and makes the questioning angels feel shy (of interrogating).*

Brushing The Teeth

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Your mouths are the paths of the Quran; therefore, purify them by means of using the siwak (a stick used as tooth cleanser). 202

Purity; The Key To Prayers

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Purifying is the key to prayer, the takbir the consecration of it, and the taslim the conclusion. 203

Banishing The People Of Najran

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

O Ali, if you are given the position of leadership, then banish the people of Najran from the Arabian Peninsula. 204

The Prayer Of The Wronged

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

O Ali, beware of the prayer of the wronged, because they only ask Almighty Allah for their dues. Verily, Almighty Allah will never impede anyone from being given his due. 205

To Die In Defence Of Property

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying,

Whoever is killed in defense of his property is martyr. 206

- 1. For more information about this issue, the gentle reader is advised to refer to the book entitled Man' Tadwin Al-Hadith by Sayyid Ali Al-Shahristani. The book has been translated into English, under the title: The Prohibition of Recording the Hadith, by Badr Shahin and published by Ansariyan Publications. [Translator]
- 2. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 210.
- 3. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal, pp. 418 (the English version).
- 4. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 2:261.
- 5. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 2:261.
- 6. Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 3:193.
- 7. Sunan Al-Tirmidhi 4:53.
- 8. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 1:171.
- 9. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 1:182.
- 10. Al-Tabrisi, Mishkat Al-Anwar (the English version), pp. 339.
- 11. Al-karrani, Tuhaf Al-'Uqul (the English version), pp. 29.
- 12. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 2:16.
- 13. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 1:46.
- 14. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 2:16.
- 15. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 2:18.
- 16. Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 1:18.
- 17. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 6:162.
- 18. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 1:172.
- 19. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 2:72.
- 20. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 2:116.
- 21. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 5:87.
- 22. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 4:264.
- 23. Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi, Hayat Al-Imam Al-Ridha 2:289.
- 24. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 3:5.
- 25. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Tawhid, pp. 23.
- 26. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:212, H. 1098.
- 27. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:72.
- 28. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal, pp. 23.
- 29. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 74:123.
- 30. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 4:228.
- 31. Sunan Abi-Dawud 1:23, H. 154.

- 32. Sunan Abi-Dawud 1:26, H. 190.
- 33. Al-karrani, Tuhaf Al-'Uqul.
- 34. Khalid Al-Barqi, Al-Mahasin, pp. 13-4.
- 35. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Al-Amali 1:135.
- 36. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 74:55.
- 37. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 6:322.
- 38. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:33, H. 595.
- 39. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 74:46.
- 40. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:172, H. 843.
- 41. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:243, H. 1298.
- 42. Al-kasrami, Musnad Al-Imam Ali, pp. 90.
- 43. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:152, H. 728.
- 44. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:146, H. 703.
- 45. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:155, H. 753.
- 46. According to Abu'l-Na•r's narration, the Holy Prophet (S) said this statement in this way:
  'And I am the first to submit.'
- 47. Ibn kazm, Al-Muhalla 4:95-6. Sahih Muslim 1:215; Musnad Abi-'Awanah 2:101.
- 48. Sunan Abi-Dawud 1:24, H. 164.
- 49. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:199, H. 960.
- 50. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 74:54.
- 51. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 2:144.
- 52. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Amali, pp. 6.
- 53. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:2, H. 565.
- 54. Al-kasrami, Musnad Al-Imam Ali, pp. 60.
- 55. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:126. H. 586.
- 56. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Amali, pp. 304.
- 57. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal 1:71.
- 58. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 3:625.
- 59. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Amali, pp. 173.
- 60. Sunan Abi-Dawud 4:174.
- 61. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:84, H. 645.
- 62. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:214, H. 998.
- 63. Al-kasrami, Musnad Al-Imam Ali, pp. 158.
- 64. Al-kasrami, Musnad Al-Imam Ali, pp. 157.
- 65. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:84, H. 922.

- 66. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:135, H. 641.
- 67. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 3:329.
- 68. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Al-Amali 2:194.
- 69. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:214.
- 70. Abu-Na’im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 1:74-5.
- 71. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:46.
- 72. Abu-Na’im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 3:178.
- 73. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:64.
- 74. Khalid Al-Barqi, Al-Mahasin, pp. 279.
- 75. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 6:61.
- 76. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:90, H. 695.
- 77. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 6:102.
- 78. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:271.
- 79. Shaykh Al-Saduq, ‘Ilal Al-Shara'i’, pp. 196.
- 80. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 6:316.
- 81. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 2:338.
- 82. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:311.
- 83. One of the social conventions of Islam, it is highly recommended to say Alhamdu lillahi (All praise be to Allah) immediately after sneezing. Upon hearing this phrase, it is highly recommended to address the sneezer with the statement: yarhamuka allahu (May Allah have mercy upon you), which is similar to the expression of God bless you. This practice is called in Arabic, and in Muslim jurisprudential terminology, tasmit. [Translator]
- 84. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Al-Amali 2:92.
- 85. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 74:236.
- 86. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Al-Amali 2:134.
- 87. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 4:4.
- 88. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 74:47.
- 89. Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa'id 5:118; Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:254, H. 1356.
- 90. Abu-Na’im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 2:180.
- 91. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:232, H. 1223.
- 92. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 4:222.
- 93. The homeless (ahl Al-suffah) were poor Muslims who used to sit against the wall of the Prophet’s Mosque and Mus-

lims used to give them alms. One of these was the famous narrator Abu-Hurayrah Al-Dusi, Ja'far ibn Abi Talibused to take Abu-Hurayrah home and serve him with food. Abu-Hurayrah used to mention the kind acts of Ja'far very often.

- 94. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:33, H. 596.
- 95. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Amali, pp. 198.
- 96. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 3:197.
- 97. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Al-Amali 2:209.
- 98. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Amali, pp. 268.
- 99. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu'l-Faqih 2:340.
- 100. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:261.
- 101. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu'l-Faqih 2:336.
- 102. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 5:55.
- 103. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 60:276.
- 104. Shaykh Al-Saduq, 'Uyun Akhbar Al-Ridha 2:74.
- 105. Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 74:93.
- 106. Al-Haythami, Majma' Al-Zawa'id 8:152.
- 107. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 8:415, H. 4.
- 108. Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 3:203.
- 109. Musnad Abi-Dawud 1:23, H. 159.
- 110. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khi•al, pp. 558.
- 111. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Al-Amali 2:189.
- 112. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Amali, 18-9.
- 113. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal 1:68.
- 114. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Al-Amali 2:209.
- 115. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 8:597, H. 2.
- 116. Al-kasrami, Musnad Al-Imam Ali, pp. 283.
- 117. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 3:129.
- 118. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 47.
- 119. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 3:359 & 377.
- 120. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 3:359 & 377.
- 121. Al-Tabrisi, Mishkat Al-Anwar, pp. 403 (the English version).
- 122. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal 1:113.
- 123. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 11:560, S. 19, H. 1.
- 124. AlMuttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 2:335.
- 125. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu'l-Faqih 2:335.

- 126. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 16:51.
- 127. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:60.
- 128. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:387.
- 129. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:387.
- 130. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Al-Amali 2:311.
- 131. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu’l-Faqih 2:342.
- 132. Al-Irbali, Kashf Al-Ghummah 3:92.
- 133. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 2:55.
- 134. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 2:99.
- 135. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 69:403.
- 136. Sunan Al-Nassa'i 1:286; Tafsir Ibn Kathir 4:250.
- 137. Al-karrani, Tuhaf Al-’Uqul, pp. 17.
- 138. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:214, H. 995.
- 139. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal 1:5.
- 140. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:323.
- 141. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu’l-Faqih 2:334.
- 142. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 74:48.
- 143. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:443.
- 144. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu’l-Faqih 2:333.
- 145. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 74:66.
- 146. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:441.
- 147. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 72:201.
- 148. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Al-Amali, pp. 14.
- 149. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 74:58.
- 150. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal 1:96.
- 151. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 5:88.
- 152. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 1:344.
- 153. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu’l-Faqih 2:337.
- 154. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 69:70.
- 155. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 4:182.
- 156. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 6:319.
- 157. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu’l-Faqih 2:445.
- 158. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 74:46.
- 159. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:802.
- 160. Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa'id 3:94.
- 161. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:519.
- 162. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:513.

- 163. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:327.
- 164. Shaykh Al-Saduq, ‘Uyun Akhbar Al-Ridha 2:42.
- 165. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:343, H. 1345.
- 166. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Al-Amali 2:198.
- 167. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal, pp. 681.
- 168. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 74:54.
- 169. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Qurb Al-Isnad, pp. 45.
- 170. Abu-Na’im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 3:204.
- 171. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal 1:62.
- 172. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 8:421, S. 18, H. 1.
- 173. Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa'id 1:260.
- 174. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:96.
- 175. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:156, H. 758.
- 176. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:123, H. 563.
- 177. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:235, H. 1244.
- 178. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:88, H. 776.
- 179. Al-Barqi, Al-Mahasin, pp. 553.
- 180. Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala Al-Sahihayn 4:153.
- 181. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:41, H. 609.
- 182. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:52, H. 633.
- 183. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:197, H. 956.
- 184. Shaykh Al-Saduq, ‘Uyun Akhbar Al-Ridha 1:137.
- 185. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:28, H. 581.
- 186. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 2:855.
- 187. Abu-Na’im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 3:202.
- 188. Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 3:149.
- 189. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 11:533, H. 4.
- 190. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 71:289.
- 191. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Al-Amali 2:73.
- 192. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal 1:15.
- 193. Sunan Al-Nassa'i 2:285; Sunan Ibn Majah 2:196.
- 194. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 1:461.
- 195. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 1:461.
- 196. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu’l-Faqih 1:47.
- 197. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:163, H. 792.

- 198. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu'l-Faqih 2:194; Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al- Shi'ah 1:230.
- 199. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu'l-Faqih 2:335.
- 200. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu'l-Faqih 1:10.
- 201. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal pp. 840.
- 202. Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 4:296.
- 203. Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 7:124.
- 204. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:87, H. 661.
- 205. Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 3:202.
- 206. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:31, H. 590.

Imam Ali's Educational Teachings And Sermons

Through its laws, Islam has paid very much attention to disciplining the behavior, conducts, and mental instincts of human beings, because the major aim of Islam is to create a virtuous human being who seeks justice, establishes the truth, and makes every effort to achieve comprehensive prosperity for himself as well as his nation and homeland.

Islam's view to humanity has always been so comprehensive that it depended upon the entire apprehension of man's mental affairs and components. Islam therefore treated all these affairs as objectively and precisely as possible, establishing perfect methods that deter man from any sort of deviation and misconduct that may lead to a bottomless abyss.

The methods of Islamic education extend to the depths of souls and the innermost feelings to purify them from such wicked sentiments as selfishness, arrogance, charlatanry, and hypocrisy. These methods also create a strong bond between the Creator and the created beings to take them up to the world of illumination and self-denial. This is why man is distinguished from all other cre-

ated beings and is given the honor to be the vicegerent of Almighty Allah on this planet.

It goes without saying that the wide-awake religious education that is based on sound foundations will contribute greatly to the eradication of wrong and injustice and to the prevalence of social justice, if only it is put into effect and is given prevalence over the whole world.

Imam Ali ('a), the most thoughtful mind of humanity as a whole, comprehended masterfully all fields of life, touched on the impressions of human beings all over the stages of their lives, and knew their tendencies and inclinations. Referring to this fact, he ('a) says,

Even though I have not reached the age which those before me had; yet I looked into their behavior and thought over events of their lives. I walked among their ruins until I was as one of them. In fact, by virtue of those of their affairs that have become known to me, it is as though I have lived with them from the first to the last. I have therefore been able to discern the impure from the clean and the benefit from the harm.

In accordance with his understanding of what makes man happy and what makes him wretched, Imam Ali ('a), through his instructions that he made to his sons and prominent companions, established his own educational courses that are characterized by targeting at the issues and traits of souls so as to divest them of any wicked feature and to found them on sound bases of non- stop alert and perfect perception, which deter souls from any behavioral deviation.

These courses too, comprise all aspects of life, including the reciprocal behavior and the strong bonds that are required to exist among all human beings. The Imam ('a) thus declares that man must love for his mates whatever he loves for himself and hate for them whatever he hates for himself. He ('a) also declares that human beings are always the brothers of each other, even if their religions, faiths, ethnic groups, and colors vary.

Let us now present a group of Imam Ali's precious instructions and precepts.

Imam Ali's Instructive Will To His Son Imam Al-Hasan

From the father who is shortly to die, who acknowledges the hardships of the times, who has turned away from life, who has submitted himself to the calamities of time, who realizes the evils of the worlds, who is living in the abodes of the dead and is due to depart from them any day; to the son who yearns for what is not to be achieved, who is treading the path of those who have died, who is the victim of ailments, who is entangled in the worries of the days, who is a target of hardships, a slave of the world, a trader of its deception, a debtor of wishes, a prisoner of mortality, an ally of worries, a neighbor of grief, and a victim of distresses, who has been overpowered by desires and who is a successor of the dead.

Now you should know that what I have learnt from the turning away of this world from me, the onslaught of time over me, and the advancing of the next world towards me is enough to prevent me from remembering anyone except myself and from thinking beyond myself. However, when I confined myself to my own worries leaving the worries of others, my intelligence saved me and protected me from my desires.

It clarified to me my affairs and led me to seriousness wherein there was no trickery and truth, which was not tarnished by falsehood. Here, I found you a part of myself, rather I found you my whole, so much so that if anything befell you, it was as though it befell me and if death came to you it was as though it came to me. Consequently, your affairs meant to me what my own matters meant to me. So, I have written this piece of advice to you as an instrument of seeking help through it, whether I remain alive for you or cease to exist.

I advise you, O my child, to fear Allah, to abide by His commands, to fill your heart with remembrance of Him, and to cling to hope from Him. No

connection is more reliable than the connection between you and Allah provided you take hold of it.

Enliven your heart with preaching, kill it by renunciation, energize it with firm belief, enlighten it with wisdom, humiliate it by recalling death, make it believe in mortality, make it see the misfortunes of this world, make it fear the authority of the time and the severity of some changes during the nights and the days, place before it the events of past people, recall to it what befell those who were before you, and walk among their cities and ruins.

Then, see what they did and from what they have gone away and where they have gone and stayed. You will find that they departed from their friends and remain in loneliness. Shortly, you too will be like one of them. Therefore, plan for your place of stay and do not sell your next life with this world.

Give up discussing what you do not know and speaking about what does not concern you. Keep off the track from which you fear to go astray because refraining from moving when there is fear of straying is better than embarking on dangers. Ask others to do good deeds; you will thus be among the good doers. Desist others from evil with your action as well as your speech and keep off, to the best of your ability, from he who commits it.

Struggle for Allah as is His due; and the reviling of a reviler should not deter you in matters of Allah. Leap into dangers for the sake of the truth wherever it be. Acquire insight into religious law. Habituate yourself to endure hardships since the best trait of character is endurance in matters of the truth.

In all your affairs, resign yourself to Allah, because you will thus be resigning yourself to a secure shelter and a strong protector. You should ask only from your Lord because in His hand is all the giving and depriving. Seek prosperity from Allah as much as you can. Understand my advice and do not turn away from it, because the best saying is that which benefits. Know that there is no good in that knowledge, which does not

benefit, and if knowledge is not made use of, then its acquisition is not justified.

O my child, when I noticed that I was of goodly age and noticed that I was increasing in weakness, I hastened with my will for you and wrote down salient points of it; lest death overtook me before I divulged to you what I have in my heart, or lest my wit be affected as my body has been affected, or the forces of passions or the mischief of the world overtake you making you like a stubborn camel.

Certainly, the heart of a young man is like uncultivated land. It accepts whatever is strewn on it. So, I hastened to mould you properly before your heart hardened up and your mind became occupied, so that you might be ready to accept through your intelligence the results of the experience of others and be saved from going through these experiences yourself.

In this way, you would avoid the hardship of seeking them and the difficulties of experimenting. Thus, you are getting to know what we had experienced and even those things are becoming clear to you, which we might have missed.

O my child, even though I have not reached the age, which those before me have, yet I looked into their behavior and thought over events of the lives. I walked among their ruins until I was as one of them. In fact, by virtue of those of their affairs that have become known to me, it is as though I have lived with them from the first to the last. I have therefore been able to discern the impure from the clean and the benefit from the harm.

I have selected for you the choicest of those matters, collected for you their good points, and kept away from you their useless points. Since I feel for you affairs as a living father should feel, and I aim at giving you training, I thought it should be at a time when you are advancing in age and new on the stage of the world, possessing upright intention and clean heart and that I should begin with the teaching of the Book of Allah, to Whom belongs Might and Majesty, and its interpretation, the

laws of Islam and its commands, its lawful matters and unlawful matters, and that I should not go beyond these for you.

Then I feared lest you should be confused as other people had been confused on account of their passions and different views. Therefore, in spite of my dislike for you being so warned, I thought it better for me to make this position strong rather than leave you in a position where I do not regard you safe from falling into destruction. I hoped that Allah would help you in your straightforwardness and guide you in your resoluteness. Consequently, I wrote this piece of my will for you.

Know, O my child, that what I love most for you to adopt from my will is to fear Allah, to confine yourself to what Allah has made obligatory on you, and to follow the actions of your forefathers and the virtuous people of your household, because they did not fall short in seeing for themselves what you will see for yourself, and they did about their affairs as you would like to think about your affairs.

Thereafter, their thinking led them to discharge the obligations they came to know of and to desist from what they were not required to do. If your heart does not accept this without acquiring knowledge as they acquired it, then your search should first be by way of understanding and learning and not by falling into doubts or being entangled in quarrels.

Before you probe into this, you should begin by seeking Allah's help and turning to Him for competence and keeping aloof from everything that throws you into doubt or flings you towards misguidance.

When you have made sure that your heart is clean and humble and your thoughts have come together and you have only one thought which is about this matter, when you will see what I have explained to you; but if you have not been able to achieve that peace of observation and thinking which you would like to have, then know that you are only stamping the ground like a blind she-camel and falling into darkness while a seeker of religion should not grope in the dark or create confusion. It is better to avoid this.

Appreciate my advice, O my child, and know that He Who is the Master of death is also the Master of life, that the Creator causes death as well; that He Who destroys is also the restorer of life and that He Who inflicts disease is also the curer. This world continues in the way Allah has made it with regard to its pleasures, trials, rewards on the Judgment Day, and all that He wishes and you do not know.

If any thing of this advice is not understood by you, then attribute it to your ignorance of it, because when you were first born, you were born ignorant. Thereafter, you acquired knowledge. There are many matters of which you are ignorant, in which your sight first wonders, and your eye wonders. Then after this, you see them. Therefore, cling to Him Who created you, fed you, and put you in order. Your worship should be for Him, your eagerness should be towards Him, and your fear should be of Him.

Know, O my child, that no one received messages from Allah the Glorified as the Prophet (may Allah bless him and his progeny) did. Therefore, regard him as your forerunner and leader towards deliverance. Certainly, I shall spare no effort in giving you advice and surely, even if you try, you cannot acquire that insight for your welfare as I have for you.

Know, O my child, that if there had been a partner with your Lord, his messengers too should have come to you, you would have seen signs of his authority and power, and you should have known his deeds and qualities. But He is only One God as He has described Himself. No one can dispute with Him in His authority. He is from ever and will be forever. He is before all things without any beginning.

He will remain after all things without any end. He is far too great to have His divinity proved by the encompassing heart or eye. When you have understood this, then you should do what is done by him who is like you by way of his low position, his lack of authority, his increasing incapability, and his great need of his Lord for seeking His obedience, fearing His chastisement, and apprehending His anger, because He does not command you save for virtue and does not refrain you save from evil.

O my child, I have informed you about the world, its condition, its decay, and its passing away; and I have informed you of the next world and of

what has been provided in it for its people. I have recounted to you parables about it so that you may draw instruction from them and act upon them.

The example of those who have understood the world is like those travelers who, being disgusted with drought-stricken places, set off for greenery and a fruitful place. Then, they endure difficulties on the way, separation from friends, hardships of the journey, and unwholesome food in order to reach their fields of plenty and place of stay. Consequently, they do not feel any pain in all this and do not regard any expenditure to be waste.

Nothing is more loveable to them than what takes them near their goal and carries them closer to their place of stay. Against this, the example of those who are deceived by this world is like the people who were in a green place but they became disgusted with it and went to a drought-stricken place. Therefore, for them, nothing is more detestable or abominable than to leave the place where they were to go to a place, which they will reach unexpectedly and for which they are heading.

O my child, make yourself the measure for dealings between you and others. Thus, you should desire for others what you desire for yourself and hate for others what you hate for yourself. Do not oppress as you do not like to be oppressed. Do good deeds to others as you would like good deeds to be done to you.

Regard bad for yourself whatever you regard bad for others. Accept that treatment from others, which you would like others to accept from you. Do not talk about what you do not know even though what you know be very little. Do not say to others what you do not like to be said to you.

Know that self-admiration is contrary to propriety of action and is a calamity for the mind. Therefore, increase your striving and do not become a treasurer for wealth to be inherited by others. When you have been guided on the right path, humble yourself before Allah as much as you can.

Know that in front of you lies a road of long distance and severe hardship and that you cannot avoid seeking it. Take your requirements of provision keeping the burden light. Do not load your back beyond your power lest its weight becomes a mischief for you. Whenever you come across a needy person who can carry for you your provision to hand it back to you on the Judgment Day when you will need it, then accept him as good opportunity and get him to carry it.

Put in that provision as much as you are able to, for it is likely that if you may need him afterwards, you may not get hold of him. If a person is willing to borrow from you in the days of your affluence to pay it back to you at the time of your need, then make use of this opportunity.

Know that in front of you lies an impassable valley wherein the light-burdened man will be in a better condition than the heavy-burden one, and the slow-paced would be in a worse condition than the swift-paced. Your terminating point at the other end of this passage will necessarily be either Paradise or Hell. Therefore, reconnoiter for yourself before alighting, and prepare the place before coming down, because after death there can be no preparation nor return to this world.

Know that He Who owns the treasuries of the heavens and the earth has permitted you to pray to Him and has promised you acceptance of the prayer. He has commanded you to beg from Him in order that He may give you and to seek His mercy in order that He may have mercy on you. He has not placed anything between you and Him that may veil Him from you.

He has not required you to have a mediator for you to Him, and if you err, He has not prevented you from repentance. He does not hasten with punishment. He does not taunt you for repenting, nor does He humiliate you when humiliation is more appropriate for you. He has not been harsh in accepting repentance. He does not severely question you about your sins. He does not disappoint you of His mercy. Rather, He regards abstention from sin as a virtue. He counts your one sin as one while He counts your one virtue as ten.

He has opened for you the door of repentance and the door of listening to your excuses. Therefore, whenever you call Him, He hears your call, and whenever you whisper to Him, He knows the whispers.

You place before Him your needs, unveil yourself before Him, complain to Him of your worries, beseech Him to remove your troubles, seek His help in your affairs, and ask from the treasuries of His mercy that no one else has power to give, namely length of life, health of body, and increase in sustenance. Then, He has placed the keys to His treasuries in your hands in the sense that He has shown you the way to ask Him.

Therefore, wherever you wish, open the doors of His favor with prayer and let the abundant rains of His mercy fall on you. Delay in acceptance of the prayer should not disappoint you, because the grant of prayer is according to the measure of your intention. Sometimes, acceptance of prayer is delayed with a view to its being a source of greater reward to the asker and of better gifts to the expectant.

Sometimes, you ask for a thing but it is not given to you, and a better thing is given to you later or a thing is taken away from you for some greater good of yours, because sometimes, you ask for a thing, which contains ruin for your religion if it is given to you. Therefore, your request should be for things whose beauty should be lasting and whose burden should remain away from you. As for wealth, it will not last for you nor will you live for it.

O my child, know that you have been created for the next world, not for this world, for destruction in this world not for lasting, and for dying not for living. You are in a place, which does not belong to you, a house for making preparations, and a passage towards the next world.

You are being chased by death from which the runner-away cannot escape, as it would surely overtake him. So, be on guard against it; lest it overtakes you at a time when you are in a sinful state and you are thinking of repenting but it creates obstruction between you and repentance. In such a case, you will ruin yourself.

O my child, remember death very much and the place where you have to go suddenly and reach after death, so that when it comes you are already on your guard against it and have prepared yourself for it and it does not come to you all of a sudden and surprise you. Beware lest you become deceived by the leanings of the people towards worldly attraction and their rushing upon it. Allah has warned you about it and the world has informed you of its mortal character and unveiled to you its evils.

Surely, those who go after it are like barking dogs or devouring carnivore who growl at each other, the stronger among them eat away the weaker, and the big among them tramples over the small. Some are like tied cattle and some like untied cattle that have lost their wits and are running in unknown directions. They are flocks of calamities wandering in rugged valleys.

There is neither herdsman to detain them nor tenderer to take them to grazing. The world has put them on the track of blindness and taken away their eyes from the beacons of guidance. They have therefore been perplexed in its bewildering and sunk in its pleasures. They took it as a god so it played with them. They too played with it and forgot what is beyond it.

Darkness is disappearing gradually. Now, it is as though travelers have come down and the hasteners will soon meet.

Know, O my child, that everyone who is riding on the carriage of night and day is being carried by them even though he may be stationary, and he is covering the distance even though he is staying and resting.

Know with certainty that you cannot achieve your desire and cannot exceed your destined life. You are on the track of those before you. Therefore, be humble in seeking and moderate in earning, because often seeking leads to deprivation. Every seeker of livelihood does not get it, nor is everyone who is moderate in seeking deprived.

Keep yourself away from all low things even though they may take you to your desired aims, because you will not have any return for your own respect, which you spend. Do not be the slave of others, for Allah had made

you free. There is no good in the good that is achieved through evil and no good in comfort that is achieved through disgracing hardship.

Beware lest bearers of greed should carry you and make you descend to the springs of destruction. If you can manage that there must not be any wealthy person between yourself and Allah, do so, because in any case you will find what is for you and obtain your share. A little received directly from Allah the Glorified is more dignified than that which is more but is received through the obligation of His creatures, although really all is from Allah.

It is easier to rectify what you miss by silence than to secure what you lose by speaking. Whatever is in a pot can be retained by closing the lid. I should prefer you to retain what is in your hands rather to seek what is in other's hands. Bitterness of disappointment is better than seeking from people. Manual labor with chastity is better than the riches of a vicious life. A man is the best guard of his own secrets. Often a man strives for that harms him. He who speaks much speaks nonsense.

Whoever ponders perceives. Associate with people of virtue; you will become one of them. Keep aloof from people of vice; you will remain safe from them. The worst food is that which is unlawful. Oppressing the weak is the worst oppression. Where leniency is unsuitable, harshness is lenience. Often cure is illness and illness is cure. Often the ill-wisher gives correct advice while the well-wisher cheats.

Do not depend upon hopes because hopes are the mainstay of fools. It is wise to preserve one's experience. Your best experience is that which teaches you a lesson. Make use of leisure before it changes into the hour of grief. Every seeker does not achieve what he seeks; and every leaving one does not return. To lose provision and to earn evil for the Judgment Day means ruin. Every matter has a consequence.

What is destined for you will shortly come to you. A trader undertakes a risk. Often a small quantity is more beneficial than a large quantity. There is no good in an ignoble helper nor in a suspicious friend. Be compliant with the world as long as it is in your grip. Do not put yourself to

risk as regards any thing in expectation for more than that. Beware lest the feeling of enmity should overpower you.

Bear yourself towards your brother in such a way that if he disregards kinship, you keep to it; when he turns away, be kind to him and draw near to him; when he withholds, spend for him; when he goes away, approach him; when he is harsh, be lenient; when he commits wrong, think of his excuse for it so much so as though you are a slave of him and he is the benevolent master over you. But take care that this should not be done inappropriately and that you should not behave so with an undeserving person.

Do not take the enemy of your friend as a friend because you will thus antagonize your friend. Give true advice to your brother, be it good or bitter. Swallow your anger because I did not find a sweeter thing than it is in the end, and nothing more pleasant in consequence. Be lenient to him who is harsh to you for it is likely that he will shortly become lenient to you. Treat your enemy with favors, because this is sweeter of the two successes: the success of revenge and the success of doing favor.

If you intend to cut yourself off from a friend, leave some scope for him from your side by which he may resume friendship if it so occurs to him some day. If anyone has a good idea about you, prove it to be true. Do not disregard the interests of your brother depending upon your terms with him, for he is not your brother if you disregard his interests. Your household should not become the most miserable people through you. Do not lean towards him who turns away from you.

Your brother should not be more firm in his disregard of kinship than you in paying regard to it, and you should exceed in doing good to him than is evil to you. Do not feel too much the oppression of a person who oppresses you, because he is only busy in harming himself and benefiting you. The reward of him who pleases you is not that you displease him.

Know, O my child, that livelihood is of two kinds: a livelihood that you seek and a livelihood that seeks you, which is such that if you do not reach it, it will come to you. How bad it is to bend down at the time of

need and to be harsh in riches! You should have from this world only that with which you can adorn your permanent abode.

If you cry over what has gone out of your hands, then also cry for what has not at all come to you. Infer about what has not yet happened from what has already happened, because occurrences are ever similar. Do not be like those whom preaching does not benefit unless you inflict pain on them, because the wise take instruction from teaching while beasts learn only from beating.

Ward off from yourself the onslaught of worries by firmness of endurance and purity of belief. He who gives up moderation commits excess. A companion is like a relation. A friend is he whose absence also proves the friendship. Passion is a partner of distress. Often the near ones are remoter than the distant ones, and often the distant ones are nearer than the near ones.

A true stranger is he who has no friend. He who transgresses the truth narrows his own passage. He who stays in his position remains constant upon it. The most trustworthy intermediary is that which you adopt between yourself and Allah the Glorified. He who does not care for your interests is your enemy. When greed leads to ruin, deprivation is an achievement. Not every defect can be reviewed, and not every opportunity recurs. Often a person with eyes misses the track while a blind person finds the correct path.

Delay an evil because you will be able to hasten it whenever you desire. The disregard of kinship of the ignorant is equal to the regard for kinship of the wise. Whoever takes the world to be safe, it will betray him. Whoever regards the world as great, it will humiliate him. Everyone who shoots does not hit. When authority changes, the time changes too. Consult the friend before adopting a course and the neighbor before taking a house. Beware, lest you mention in your speech what may rouse laughter even though you may be relating it from others.

Do not consult women because their view is weak and their determination is unstable. Cover their eyes by keeping them under the veil because strictness of veiling keeps them for long. Their coming out is not worse

than your allowing an unreliable man to visit them. If you can manage that they should not know anyone other than you, do so.

Do not allow a woman matters other than those about herself, because a woman is a flower not an administrator. Do not pay her regard beyond herself. Do not encourage her to intercede for others. Do not show suspicion out of place, because this leads a correct woman to evil and a chaste woman to deflection.

For every one among your servants, fix a work for which you may hold him responsible. In this way, they will not fling the work one over the other. Respect your kinsmen, because they are your wings with which you fly, the origin towards which you return, and your hands with which you attack. Place your religion and your world at Allah's disposal and beg Him to ordain the best for you in respect of the near and the far, this world and the next, and that is an end to the matter.

Another instructive will of Imam Ali to Imam Al-Hasan

O my son, I instruct you to stick to piety to Almighty Allah, to performing the prayers in their times, to defraying the zakat duties at their times, and to performing the ritual ablution as excellently as possible, for a prayer is not accepted unless it is preceded by a way of purification and a prayer of one who refrains from defraying the zakat duty is not acceptable.

I also instruct you to pardon the sinful, suppress your rage, regard your relatives, act clemently at situations of the others' impatience, learn the religious knowledge, be sure of all matters (before indulging into them), maintain reciting the Quran, act kindly towards the neighbors, enjoin the right, forbid the wrong, and avoid all indecencies in all matters that are
regarded as disobedience to Almighty Allah. [1]

Imam Ali's instructive will to His Son Imam Al-Husayn

O son, I command you to fear Allah in richness and poverty, cling to the word of the truth in satisfaction and rage, be moderate in richness and poverty, be fair to your friends and enemies, work in activity and laziness, and satisfy yourself with Allah in crises and luxury.

O son, an evil that is followed by Paradise is not a true evil, and a welfare that is followed by Hellfire is not a true welfare. Every comfort other than Paradise is valueless and every misfortune other than Hellfire is in reality wellbeing.

You should know, O my son, that he who notices his own flaws will give up chasing others' flaws. Nothing will cover those who strip the covers of piety. He who satisfies himself with Allah's distribution of sustenance will not be sad for that which misses him. He who unsheathes the sword of aggression will be killed with it. He who digs a well for his brother will fall in it.

The screens of the houses of those who tear others' screens will be exposed. He who neglects his sin will see the others' sins as great. He who overdoes will be exhausted. He who pushes himself in the risks will be sunken. He who prefers his opinion will deviate.

He who clings only to his own views will make mistakes. He who shows arrogance against people will be humiliated. He who associates with the scholars will be respected. He who associates with the mean ones will be disgraced. He who belittles people will be insulted. He who intrudes himself in evils will be accused. He who jokes will be disrespected. He who gives much of something will be known of it.

Much speech leads to much erring. Much erring leads to decreased modesty. Little modesty leads to decreased piety. Little piety deadens the heart. The dead-hearted will be in Hell.

O son, the actual foolish is he who looks in people's defects and accepts the same defects for himself. He who ponders over things will surely learn lessons. He who learns lessons will surely retire. He who retires will be in safe. He who neglects the passions will live in freedom. People will bear love to those who abandon envy.

O son, the honor of the faithful believer is to dispense with people. Satisfaction is a never-ending treasure. He who mentions death frequently will satisfy himself with little worldly pleasures. He who realizes that his words are within his deeds will speak of nothing except what benefits him.

O son, how strange that who fears the punishment and does not cease doing evil is! How strange that who wishes for the rewards and does not repent or work is!

O son, intelligence casts on illumination, inadvertence casts on gloom, and ignorance casts on deviation. The actual happy is he who learns lessons from the others. Morality is the best heritage. The best friend is good mannerism. No growth can be expected from rupturing relations with the relatives and no wealth should be waited from lechery.

O son, good health is of ten parts, nine of which lies in silence except in situations of remembering Allah, and one lies in the abandonment of associating with the foolish ones.

O son, for those who dress the acts of disobedience to Allah in their meetings, Allah will cast humility on them. He who seeks studies will surely learn.

O son, lenience is the head of knowledge, and idiocy is its epidemic. Patience in misfortunes is one of the treasures of faith. Continence is the adornment of poverty. Thanking is the adornment of richness. Excessive visits create boredom. Tranquility is the opposite of prudence if it precedes awareness. Self-esteem refers to weak-mindedness.

O son, many views have brought sorrow, and many words have deprived of grace.

O son, there is no honor higher than Islam, no generosity more glorious than God-fearing, no fortress more protective than piety, no interceder more successful than repentance, no dress fitter than good health, and no wealth more sufficient than satisfaction with the sustenance.

He who confines himself to the minimum necessity will have rest before others and will find himself a place in the tranquil life.

O son, greed is the key to fatigue, the mount of exhaustion, and the leader to the commitment of sins. Avidity is the comprehensive of defects. The matters that you abominate from others should be sufficient disciplines for you. Your friend should enjoy the same rights that you enjoy. He who engages himself in an affair before examining the outcome will suffer misfortunes.

Planning before working saves from sorrow. He who propounds the opinions will realize the places of errors. Patience is a protector against poverty. Niggardliness is the dress of misery. Acquisitiveness is the sign of destitution. A poor man who keeps good relations is better than a wealthy one who breaks his relations with others. Everything has a food. Son of Adam (i.e. a human being) is the food of death.

O son, do not make a sinner despair. Many adopters of sins enjoy a happy end and many benevolent ones rupture their deeds and deserve Hellfire. Allah may protect us from Hellfire.

O son, many disobedient ones may be saved and many obedient ones may fail. The provisions of those who adhere to honesty will be easily attainable. The good lies in defying the passions. Hours reduce the age. Woe be to the aggressors, because the best of judges and the knower of the hidden of those who hide does exist.

O son, violence against the servants (of Allah) is the worst supplies to the Next World. Every dose has a choke and every meal has a lump in the throat. No grace can be obtained unless another is missed. Rest is very close to fatigue, misery is very close to bliss, death is very close to life, and illness is very close to health. Blessed be those who behave faithfully

to Allah in action, knowledge, love, hatred, receipt, refusal, speech, silence, deeds, and words.

Excellent is the knowledgeable who acts seriously and gets ready as he fears death. He gives advice when he is asked, and keeps peace when he is neglected. His wording is true and his silence is an answer without exhaustion. Woe be to those who suffer deprivation, disappointment, and disobedience. They satisfy themselves with what they hate from others and disgrace people for doing what they themselves do.

O son, you should know that the affection of those whose wording is lenient is obligatory. May Allah guide you to your prosperity and reckon you with the people of his obedience, by the help of His potency. He is surely All-benevolent and All-generous. 2

Imam Ali's instructions to His Sons

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said to his sons,

O my sons, associate with people in such a manner that if you die, they weep over you, and if you are alive, they crave for your company. 3

The Imam ('a), at the last hours of his lifetime, gathered his sons and said to them,

Abide by piety and obedience to Allah and do not regret the worldly pleasures that have been taken away from you. Rise to serve your Lord and work hard in this field, but do not be reluctant, lest you will accept lowliness and encounter humiliation.

O Allah, please gather them and us on the true guidance, make them and us abstain from the worldly pleasures, and make the other world better for us than this world. 4

Imam Ali's instructive will to His son Muhammad

O son, hatred drives to death. A man who recognizes his actual worth will never be exposed to perdition. Whoever immunizes himself against his lusts will protect his worth. The value of every man depends upon what he masters excellently. Learning lessons from others brings about rationality. The most honorable wealth is to abandon hopes. Avidity is present poverty. Amicability is useful kinship. Your friend is your full brother, but not every full brother can be a friend.

Do not befriend the enemy of your friend, lest you will be the enemy of your friend. Many remote people are nearer than the close ones. A poor man who keeps good relations is better than a wealthy one who breaks his relations with others. Preaching is a haven for those who understand it properly.

He who puts others under obligation for a favor that he has done to them, has in fact spoiled his favor. He whose manners are ill, will bring about torment to himself and will be the worthiest of being hated. It is not fair to judge according to conjecture rather than confidence.

How ugly a wicked man becomes when he overcomes! How ugly depression is at misfortunes! How ugly it is to be coarse and rude to the neighbors! How ugly it is to disagree with the companion! How ugly it is for the magnanimous to be cunning! How ugly it is for a ruler to betray! You must follow your friend wherever he goes.

Do not desert your friend due to suspicion and do not leave him before you blame him. Perchance, he had an excuse while you are blaming him. Accept the apology of any one apologizing, be he truthful or untruthful, so that you will win the Intercession. Treat honorably those upon whom you depend in winning a matter, and show them more companionship, kindness, honor, reverence, and respect, because it is not proper that you recompense one who has pleased you with displeasure.

Confer upon the one who sits with you as many kind acts as possible, because, if you wish, you can experience his good reason. Whoever is attired with the garb of modesty, will have his defects concealed from the eyes of people. The provisions of those who adhere to moderation (i.e.

economization) will be easily attainable. Whoever refrains from giving free hand to his lusts will attain good reason.

There is luxury with every hardship and there are chokes with every meal. No grace can be attained unless it is followed by harm. Lack of appreciation of graces is idiocy. To sit with the foolish is ill omen. Respect the rights of those who respect your rights whether they are high-ranking or lowly.

He who gives up moderation commits excess. He who transgresses the right narrows his own passage. Many diseased persons were cured and many healthy ones passed away. When greed leads to ruin, deprivation becomes an achievement. Seek the censure of those who find you excuses. Do not spend a single night of your lifetime while you intend to cheat someone. Cheating is the worst garb a Muslim may wear. Whoever cheats on others is the worthiest of being shown disloyalty.

Corruption eradicates the abundant fortunes while economization grows up the little fortune. It is generous to fulfill the vows. He who acts generously will be prevalent. Whoever understands matters will have more reason. Give true advice to your brother and help him in any case unless this may lead you to commit an act of disobedience to Almighty Allah. Be lenient to him who has been harsh to you, for this will make you win your request.

Hours of grief are hours of expatiation. Hours exhaust your lifetime. A pleasure that is followed by Hellfire is worthless. Prosperity that leads to Hellfire is not prosperity, and evil that leads to Paradise is not evil.

Every comfort other than Paradise is valueless and every misfortune other than Hellfire is welfare. Do not disregard the interests of your brother depending upon your terms with him, for he is not your brother if you disregard his interests. Your brother should not be more firm in his disregard of kinship than you in paying regard to it, and you should exceed him in acting nicely towards him than his acting evilly towards you.

O son, if you are strong, then use your strength in obedience to Allah the Almighty and All-majestic, and if you are weak, then be weak to disobey Him. Do not allow a woman matters other than those about herself. This is better for achieving prosperous and peaceful life and permanent beauty. A woman is a flower not an administrator. So, comply with her moods under all circumstances and treat her as excellently as possible so that your life with her will be peaceful.

Endure the acts of Almighty Allah by means of being pleased with them. If you wish to have the prosperity of this world and the other world, you must cut off your greed for what others possess. Peace and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you, O son. 5

Imam Ali's instructive will to Kumayl ibn Ziyad

Instructing his faithful companion Kumayl ibn Ziyad, Imam Ali ('a) said to him,

O Kumayl, begin every day with mentioning Allah's Name and saying,

'There is neither might nor power except with Allah.' 6 *Put your trust in Allah. Mention us, pronounce our names, and invoke Allah's blessings upon us. Seek the guard of Allah, our Lord, from the evil of Satan. With the previous acts, ward off evil against yourself and against whatever is under your custody, so that you will be saved from the evil of that day.*

O Kumayl, Almighty Allah educated the Prophet (S) who, in turn, educated me, and I educate the believers and leave behind me the good education to the honorable people.

O Kumayl, I am the originator of every aspect of knowledge and the Rising Imam (i.e. Al-Qa'im) will be the sealer of all secrets.

O Kumayl, we are the offspring of one another. Allah is All-hearing and All-seeing.

O Kumayl, follow no one but us, so that you will be one of us.

O Kumayl, you need knowledge in every movement you may make.

O Kumayl, before you have food, mention the Name of Him Whose Name bans every malady and presents remedy for all ailments.

O Kumayl, share others with you on dining tables generously, and never be niggardly, because you will never endow anything to people. If you do so, Allah will reward you widely.

O Kumayl, when others sit with you for a meal, you may use good traits, give rest to your sitter, and do not blame your servant.

O Kumayl, when you are on a dining table, take as long as possible time so that your guest will have his sufficiency and others will be bestowed from your food.

O Kumayl, when you have enough food, praise Allah for His provisions to you, raising your voice so that others will imitate you and your reward will be doubled.

O Kumayl, do not fill in your stomach with food; rather, leave a place for water and flatus.

O Kumayl, do not gnaw your food, because the Messenger of Allah (S) did not use to gnaw food.

Do not leave a meal unless you still covet it. This will bring you health and make you taste its flavor, since the source of physical health is few food and water.

O Kumayl, blessing lies in the wealth of him who defrays the zakat tax, offers to the believers what they need, and regards the relatives.

O Kumayl, give your faithful relatives more than what you give to the other faithful believers. In addition, treat them more compassionately and more kindly. Give alms to the poor.

O Kumayl, never disappoint a beggar. Give him even a grain of grapes or a half date. With Allah, the alms are growing.

O Kumayl, modesty is the best dress of the believers, chastity is their best beauty, learning is their honor, and negligence of gossips is their dignity.

O Kumayl, beware of dispute, because if you do so, you will make the foolish ones challenge you and spoil your brotherhood with others.

O Kumayl, if you debate about Almighty Allah, do not speak to anyone except those who seem to be reasonable.

O Kumayl, those who debate about Almighty Allah with any person they meet are truly foolish. About them, Almighty Allah says, 'Now surely, they themselves are the fools, but they do not know.'

O Kumayl, there is a degree of superiority with every people. Beware of discussing with the lowly even if they invite you to a discussion. Be tolerant and be one of those whom Allah describes as: 'When addressed by the ignorant ones, their only response is, 'Peace be with you.''

O Kumayl, say the truth under all circumstances. Cherish the God-fearing ones, desert the sinful ones, avoid the hypocrites, and dissociate with the traitors.

O Kumayl, do not knock the doors of the unjust rulers for associating with them and earning from them. Beware of respecting them or attending their sessions, for Allah's wrath will befall you if you do so. If you have to attend there, you should mention Allah uninterruptedly, depend upon Him, and seek His guard against them. Nod your head down, deny their deeds secretly, and glorify Allah openly so that you will be supported and saved against their evils.

Chastity, tolerance, and patience are the most favorable characters that the servants offer to Allah after their faith in Him and in His Vicegerents.

O Kumayl, there is no objection to you if you do not make others know your secrets.

O Kumayl, do not show your poverty to people. Forbear it for Allah's sake dignifiedly and secretly.

O Kumayl, you can inform your brotherly friend of your secret. Yet, who is your true brotherly friend? He is that who does not disappoint you in misfortunes, does not leave you alone in troubles and sins, does not wait until you ask him for help, and does not let you inform him of your problem. You may lead him to straightforwardness when he is leaning.

O Kumayl, the believers should be the mirrors of each other; when they look at others, they should meet their needs and settle their problems.

O Kumayl, the believers are brothers. Brothers should never prefer anything to each other.

O Kumayl, if you do not like your brother, then you are not his brother. The true believer is he who follows our sayings. He who fails to keep to our sayings is acting imperfectly to us. He who acts imperfectly to us will not catch up with us. He who is not with us will be in the lowest storey of Hellfire.

O Kumayl, every concealed matter should be divulged in some way. If we divulge one of our secrets to you and order you to keep it, you should never show it to others. If you do so, then no repentance will promote you. When no repentance will promote you, your fate will be Lasa (a sorey of Hellfire).

O Kumayl, the divulgement of the secrets of Muhammad's Household is unforgivable and intolerable. Except for the faithful believers, do not narrate their sayings to anyone.

O Kumayl, do not inform the disbelievers of our secret affairs; otherwise, they will increase their enmity towards you and use these secrets for eradicating you up to a day on which they will be punished for their acts.

O Kumayl, there must be a return for the Occulted Leader and there must come a day on which we will be the prevalent and the triumphant.

O Kumayl, Allah shall give you both the prosperity of the beginning and the prosperity of the end result.

O Kumayl, your enemies are now given respite because of your living among them; they are amused so that you are amused, they are allowed to drink because you are allowed to drink, they are allowed to eat because you are allowed to eat, and they are allowed to come and go because you are allowed to come and go.

Sometimes, you may exceed them in these matters. By Allah, they are forced to let you enjoy all these things. However, Allah the Almighty and All-majestic shall eventually give you victory and inflict disappointment on them.

By Allah, when the promised day will come and your Patron will appear, your enemies will no longer allowed to eat with you, to do what you will be allowed to do, to knock your doors, and to enjoy the blessings you will enjoy. They will be humble and despised: 'wherever they are found, they shall be seized and murdered a horrible murdering.'

O Kumayl, the faithful believers and you must thank Allah the All-exalted for this grace and for all other graces.

O Kumayl, in problems, you should say, 'There is neither might nor power except with Allah,' so that these problems will be solved. In graces, you should say, 'All praise be to Allah (Alhamdu-lillah),' so that they will be doubled for you. If your sustenance is slowed, you should implore the forgiveness of Allah so that sustenance will be increased for you.

O Kumayl, when Satan inspires evil insinuations in your heart, you should say, 'I seek the protection of Allah the All-powerful against Satan the seducing. I seek the protection of Muhammad the well-pleased against the evil of whatever is predetermined and predestined. I seek the protection of the God of all people against the evil of all jinn and all human beings.' You may then invoke Allah's blessings upon the Prophet and his Household so that you will be saved from the burdens of Iblis and the devils that accompany him, although they all are not less evil than Iblis.

O Kumayl, the devils have their own trickeries, evil insinuations, hints, allusions, and stings that they use against every one according to the level of his obedience or disobedience to Almighty Allah. Therefore, they overcome people according to their standings and levels (of faith).

O Kumayl, there is no enemy more vehement than these devils and there is no harm more destructive than their harm. Their one and only wish is that you will accompany them when they will be driven to the painful chastisement, the flames of which will not be lessened for them and will not be stopped even for a single moment. They shall be abiding there everlastingly.

O Kumayl, the wrath of Allah the All-exalted is surrounding one who does not seeks protection against them through the Name of Allah and the name of His Prophet as well as the determining causes and the protective means of Allah, may His Almightiness be majestic. May Allah send peace and blessings upon His Prophet and the household of His Prophet!

O Kumayl, the devils seduce you by means related to themselves, but if you do not respond to them, they then cheat on you by means related to yourself.

Thus, they beautify your lusts in your sight, promise you that they will fulfill your wishes and desires, make matters light for you, make you forget (the right), warn you against (doing the true thing), enjoin you to commit the wrong, and then make you have an excessively good idea about Allah the Almighty and All-majestic so that you will hope for His forgiveness immoderately and thus you commit acts of disobedience to Him due to your falling under the seductive effects of the devils. However, the penal abode of the disobedient is Lasa.

O Kumayl, always remember and retain this saying of Allah the Almighty and All-majestic: 'Satan has instigated them and given them respite (deceitfully).' The one who seduces and instigates is none but Satan.

O Kumayl, always remember what Allah the All-exalted has said to Iblis the accursed: 'And collect against them your forces riding and on foot, and share with them in wealth and children, and hold out promises to them; and Satan makes not promises to them but to deceive.'

O Kumayl, Iblis (Satan) does not make promises on himself; rather, he makes promises on behalf of the Lord so that he can make people dare to disobey the Lord. If they do, Satan will have engaged them in such disobediences.

O Kumayl, Satan comes to you with the most precise of his evil devices; he therefore orders you to do the act of obedience, which he knows that you have accustomed yourself to doing it familiarly. Thus, you believe that these suggestions are coming from a noble angel, while they are in reality issued by Satan the accursed. When you trust these suggestions and feel secure, Satan will then lead you to committing the grand, destructive sins the committers of which have no way to be redeemed.

O Kumayl, Satan has many snares that he installs; therefore, beware lest he makes you fall in one of them.

O Kumayl, the lands are full of the traps of the devils and none can be saved from these traps except those who adhere to us tenaciously. Allah the All-exalted has informed you that none can be redeemed from Satan except His true servants. The true servants of Allah are only those who are loyal to us.

O Kumayl, Allah the Almighty and All-exalted thus says, 'Surely, as regards My servants, you (Satan) have no authority over them.'

Allah the Almighty and All-majestic also says, 'His (i.e. Satan) authority is only over those who befriend him and those who associate others with Allah.'

O Kumayl, by being loyal to us, you may save yourself from letting Satan have a share in your wealth and sons.

O Kumayl, I swear by Allah the All-exalted that I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, 'When Satan plans to make some people commit such offensive acts like adultery, drinking intoxicants, usury, and the like indecencies, he first endears to them intense worship, piety, kneeling (before God), submission (to God), and prostration. He then leads them to be loyal to the patterns that invite to Hellfire, and on the Resurrection Day, they shall not be assisted.'

O Kumayl, faith is either steady or shaky. Beware of having shaky faith.

O Kumayl, you will have steady faith only if you fit tightly to the patent path that will not lead you to a bend and will not take you away from the right course to which we have led and guided you.

O Kumayl, in obligatory actions, there is no permission (to leave doing them). In recommendable actions, there is no force (to do them).

O Kumayl, Allah the Almighty and All-majestic will not interrogate you except about what He has made incumbent upon you to do. We do the supererogatory devotional acts so that they will rescue us from the unbearable horrors and the predominating calamities on the Resurrection Day.

O Kumayl, your sins are more than your good deeds. Your oblivion is more than you remembering of Allah. Allah's graces to you are more than your deeds (in obedience to Him).

O Kumayl, no single piece in you can be empty of Allah's graces and bestowment of wellbeing. You should never neglect revering, glorifying, praising, thanking, and mentioning Him at every situation.

O Kumayl, do not be one of those about whom Allah says, 'They forget about Allah. He will make them forget themselves.' Hence, He ascribes sinfulness to them. He says, 'These are the sinful people.'

O Kumayl, high ranks will not be obtained through mere performance of the prayers, observance of fasting, and giving of alms. The most impor-

tant is to perform the prayers with pure intendment, acceptable act, and sound submission.

O Kumayl, when you genuflect and prostrate yourself in prayers, all your veins and knuckles must be in a state of utter restraint so that they will help you do perfectly all the parts of your prayers.

O Kumayl, you should see when and what for the prayers you are performing are performed. If it is not performed correctly and legally, it will not be accepted.

O Kumayl, the tongue receives from the heart, and the heart supplies the soul. Consider that with which you feed your heart and body. If the source is illegal, Allah will not accept your praising and thanking Him.

O Kumayl, you should realize and know that we do not permit anybody to breach the trust of anybody. He who relates that I have permitted anybody to breach the trust is surely wrong and sinful and his result will be Hellfire. I swear I heard the Prophet (S) saying to me frequently just one hour before his death, 'O Abu'l-Hasan, give back what you are entrusted to its owner, whether he is pious or sinful, in big and small things, even if it is a thread or a needle.' He repeated the last stament thrice each time he said it.

O Kumayl, jihad should be only under the leadership of the just leader (Imam) and spoils of war are legal only if a virtuous leader gives.

O Kumayl, without the advent of a prophet, the mission of promulgating for the religion by any person including the pious believers will be either right or wrong. Moreover, it will be surely wrong unless Allah selects (certain people) for such mission.

O Kumayl, the religion is Allah's; therefore, He does not accept for anyone to call for it except the apostles, the prophets, and the successors of the prophets.

O Kumayl, the religion is Allah's; therefore, do not be deceived by the sayings of the duped people who deviated after they had been guided to

the truth and who denied and renounced after they had accepted the truth.

O Kumayl, the issue of the religion must be carried out by either a prophet, or a messenger, or an Imam (appointed by Allah). Otherwise, those who claim carrying out the mission of the religion are either followers, or ruling authorities, or devious persons, or transgressors.

O Kumayl, neither the Christians nor the Jews have disbelieved in the Divine Attributes of Almighty Allah. They have not denied Jesus and Moses either; rather, they added topics, deleted others, distorted laws, and disbelieved in others. For this reason, they were cursed and hated (by Almighty Allah), because they neither repented from their distortions nor consented to the truth.

O Kumayl, Allah accepts only from the pious.

O Kumayl, our father Adam did not beget a Jew or a Christian son; rather, his son was upright Muslim; but he did not carry out his duties; therefore, Allah did not accept the offering he had made to Him. Rather, He accepted from his brother. As a result, Adam's son envied his brother and slew him.

He is now one of those who are detained in the chamber along with other eleven ones; six from the ancient nations and six from the last nation. This chamber is in the bottom of Hellfire. The entire heat of Hellfire is only caused by the vapor of that chamber. Now, consider how this chamber should be when the heat of Hellfire is only the vapor of it.

O Kumayl, by Allah, we (the Ahl Al-Bayt) are the ones who are the pious and who are the good-doers.

O Kumayl, Allah is certainly generous, clement, great, and merciful. He attracts our attentions to His traits, orders us to follow them, and invite people to adopt them. We (the Ahl Al-Bayt) did perform without slackness, put them into practice without hypocrisy, believe in them without disloyalty, and accept them without doubt.

We have never had devils to whom we inspired and from whom we might receive inspirations, as Allah the All-exalted has described some people and mentioned them by names in His Book, saying, ''the devils from among men and jinn, some of them suggesting to others varnished falsehood to deceive them.'

O Kumayl, we are the minor weighty (i.e. precious) thing, while the Quran is the major. The Messenger of Allah (S) did make them all hear when he gathered them after he had called them all to attend a congregational prayer on a certain day and on other seven days. So, none of them failed to appear.

He then ascended the minbar, praised and thanked Almighty Allah, and said, 'O groups of people, I am only conveying the messages of my Lord, but I never say any word from my own desire. Hence, whoever believes me has in fact believed Allah, and whoever believes Allah will be awarded the gardens of Paradise. Conversely, whoever belies me has belied Allah the Almighty and All-majestic, and whoever belies Allah will be sent to the fires of Hell by Him.'

The Prophet (S) then called me and I ascended the minbar with him, and he ordered me to be one scale lower. My head was thus to the level of his chest and Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn stood to his right and left sides. He then said, 'O groups of people, (Archangel) Gabriel has ordered me on behalf of Allah the Almighty and All-majestic, your and my Lord, to let you know that the Quran is the major weighty thing and that my successor (Ali) and my two sons, and their descendants will be my vicegerents.

They represent the minor weighty things. The major weighty thing testifies to the minor weighty thing and the minor weighty thing testifies to the major weighty thing. Each one of these two is inseparably concomitant to the other until they both will return to Allah Who will then judge between the servants and them.'

O Kumayl, as long as this is our standing, then why did some people advance themselves before us and why did others fail to catch us?

O Kumayl, the Messenger of Allah did convey to them the message of his Lord and advise them sincerely, but they do not love those who advise them.

O Kumayl, one afternoon, on the mid-Ramasan day, when the Muhajirun and the An•ar were all present, the Messenger of Allah (S), standing on his feet on the minbar, said, ''Ali is part of me, my two sons are from him, the Immaculate Ones are part of me, and I am part of them. After their mother, they are the immaculate ones. They are also the ark that salvation will be the result of one who embarks on it, while drowning will be the consequence of one who fails to join it. Those who are saved will be eventually in Paradise, while those who have failed to join it will be in Lasa.

O Kumayl, 'surely, grace is in the hand of Allah; He gives it to whom He pleases; and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing.'

O Kumayl, for what reason do they envy us while Allah had created us before they knew us? Do you think that they, because of their envy towards us, will be able to remove us away from our Lord?

O Kumayl, by Allah, we are the truth about which Allah the Almighty and All-majestic has said, 'And should the truth follow their low desires, surely the heavens and the earth and all those who are therein would have perished.'

O Kumayl, by Allah, I am not slavish flatterer so as to be obeyed, I am not awakener of desires so as not to be disobeyed, and I am not coveting the food of the Bedouins (i.e. the money of the zakat taxes) so as to be called and given the name of Amiral-Mu'minin(Leader of the Believers).

O Kumayl, the seekers of the worldly pleasures will gain a vanishing and ending life, while we will gain a steady and continuous life.

O Kumayl, everybody will be to the next life. We only hope for Allah's assent and the high ranks of Paradise that He gives to the God-fearing ones exclusively.

O Kumayl, he who will not live in Paradise, will surely suffer a painful agony and permanent shame.

O Kumayl, thank Allah for His giving you success and for all things given to you. 7

- 1. Muhammad Baqir Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:151.
- 2. Ibn Shu'bah Al-karrani, Tuhaf Al-'Uqul, pp. 90.
- 3. Ibn Al-Jawzi, Tadhkirat Al-Khawass, pp. 152.
- 4. Muhammad Baqir Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:251.
- 5. Muhammad Baqir Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 7:394- 400.
- 6. la hawla wa la quwwata illa billahi.
- 7. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 77:266-76; Ibn Shu'bah Al-karrani, Tuhaf Al-'Uqul, pp. 171-6 with difference in the order of some statements and addition of others.

Sermons Of Imam Ali As

States of man in this world

Imam Ali ('a), describing unerringly the human life in this world, says,

Verily, man in this world is the target of the arrows of death and the spoils booted by misfortunes. With every drinking, there is choking; and with every eating, there is suffocation. A servant (of Allah) does not get any benefit in it except by foregoing another benefit and does not advance in age by a day except by the taking away of a day from his life. In this way, we are the helpers of death (against ourselves) and our souls are driving us in the direction of mortality.

How can we hope for survival while night and day do not raise anything in honor but that they hurry to demolish what we have built and scatter

what we have gathered? So, seek welfare and its people and let it be known to you that the giver of welfare is better than welfare itself, and the doer of evil is more evil than the evil itself. 1

Acting upon personal desires

Imam Ali ('a) has said,

O people, what I fear most about you are two things: acting according to desires and extending of hopes. As regards acting according to desires, this prevents from truth; and as regards extending of hopes, it makes one forget the next world. You should know this world is moving rapidly and nothing has remained out of it except last particles like the dregs of a vessel, which has been emptied by someone.

Beware, the next world is advancing, and either of them has sons i.e. followers. You should become sons of the next world and not become sons of this world because on the Judgment Day every son would cling to his mother. Today is the day of action and there is no reckoning while tomorrow is the day of reckoning but there would be no opportunity for action. 2

Desertion of worldly pleasures

Imam Ali ('a) used to pray Almighty Allah, saying,

O Allah, I beseech You for oblivion of this world and abhorrence of it, because its welfare is worthless, its evil is ever-prepared, its clearness in no time becomes turbid, its new in no time becomes old, the bygone of it never returns, and whatever is obtained in it is in fact a test from You and none can pass it except those whom You endue with protection and You include with Your mercy.

So, please do not include me with those who are satisfied with this world and who put their trust in it, because it will unavoidably betray him who

feels reassured of it and it will seduce him who puts his confidence in it. [3]

Laugh at death!

Imam Ali ('a) was once accompanying a funeral when he heard someone laughing. He thus said,

Is it that death has been ordained only for others? Is it that right is obligatory only on others? Is it that those whom we see departing on their journey of death will come back to us? We lay them down in their graves and then enjoy their estate as if we will live for good after them. We have ignored every preacher, man or woman, and have exposed ourselves to every catastrophe. [4]

False abusing of the world

Imam Ali ('a) once heard a man abusing the world. He thus said to him,

O you who abuses the world! O you who has been deceived by its deceit and cheated by its wrongs! Do you covet the world and then abuse it? Do you accuse it or it should accuse you? When did it bewilder you or deceive you-whether by the decay and fall of your forefathers, or by the sleeping places of your mothers under the ground?

How much you looked after them in their illness and nursed them during sickness, desiring them to be cured and consulting physicians for them in the morning when your medicine did not avail them and your wailing for them did not benefit them.

Your mourning over them did not prove useful to them and you could not achieve your aims. You could not ward off death from them with all your power. In fact, through the dying man, the world presented an illustration for you and showed you by the example of his falling down how you would also fall.

Certainly, this world is a house of truth for him who appreciates it; a place of safety for him who understands it; a house of riches for him who collects provision from it for the next world; and a house of instructions for him who draws instruction from it.

It is the place of worship for the lovers of Allah; the place of praying for the angels of Allah; the place where the revelation of Allah descends; and the marketing place for those devoted to Allah. Herein they earned mercy and herein they acquired

Paradise by way of profit

Therefore, who can abuse it when it has announced its departure and called out that it would leave! It had given news of its own destruction and the death of its people. By its hardship, it set an example of their hardships. By its pleasures, it created eagerness for the pleasures of the next world. It brings ease in the evening and grief in the morning by way of persuasion, dissuasion, alarm, and warning.

People abuse it on the morning of their repentance but others will praise it on the Judgment Day. The world recalled to them the next life and they bore it in mind. It related to them things of the next life and they acknowledged them. It preached to them and they took lesson from it. 5

After death!

Describing man's state after death, Imam Ali ('a) says,

If you could see that which has been seen by those of you who have died, you would be puzzled and troubled. Then you would have listened and obeyed; but what they have seen is yet curtained off from you. Shortly, the curtain would be thrown off. You have been shown, provided you see, and you have been made to listen, provided you listen, and you have been guided, if you accept guidance.

I spoke unto you with truth. You have been called aloud by instructive examples and warned through items full of warnings. Only man can convey messages from Allah, after the heavenly messengers (i.e. the angels). 6

The transient nature of this world

Talking about the transient nature of this world, Imam Ali ('a) says,

So now, surely this world has turned its back and announced its departure while the next world has appeared forward and proclaimed its approach. Today is the day of preparation while tomorrow is the day of race. The place to proceed to is Paradise while the place of doom is Hellfire. Is there no one to offer repentance over his faults before his death? Or is there no one to perform virtuous acts before the day of trial?

Beware, surely you are in the days of hopes behind which stands death. Whoever acts during the days of his hope before the approach of his death, his action will benefit him and his death will not harm him. But he who fails to act during the period of hope before the approach of death, his action is a loss and his death is a harm to him.

Beware and act during a period of attraction just as you act during a period of dread. Beware, surely I have not seen a coveter for Paradise asleep nor a fearful from Hellfire to be asleep. Beware, he whom right does not benefit must suffer the harm of the wrong; and he whom guidance does not keep firm will be led away by misguidance towards destruction.

Beware, you have been ordered insistently to march and been guided how to provide for the journey. Surely, the most frightening thing, which I am afraid of about you, is to follow desires and to widen the hopes. Provide for yourself from this world what would save you tomorrow (on the Judgment Day). 7

Elapse of the world

Warning against the evils and seductions of this world, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Beware, the world is wrapping itself up and has announced its departure. Its known things have become strangers and it is speedily moving backward. It is advancing its inhabitants towards destruction and driving its neighbors towards death.

Its sweet things (i.e. enjoyments) have become sour, and its clear things have become polluted. Consequently, what has remained of it is just like the remaining water in a vessel or a mouthful of water in the measure. If a thirsty person drinks it, his thirst is not quenched.

O servants of Allah, get ready to go out of this world for whose inhabitants decay is ordained, and beware heart’s wishes should overpower you, nor should you take your stay in life to be long.

By Allah, if you cry like the she-camel that has lost its young one, call out like the cooing of pigeons, make noise like devoted recluses, and turn to Allah leaving your wealth and children as a means to secure His nearness and high position with Him or the forgiveness of sins which have been covered by His books and recorded by His angels, it would be less than His reward that I expect for you or His retribution that I fear about you.

By Allah, if your hearts melt down thoroughly and your eyes shed tears of blood either in hope for Him or for fear from Him and you are also allowed to live in this world all the time that it lasts, even then your actions cannot pay for His great bounties over you and His having guided you towards faith. 8

Haste towards righteous acts

Calling to devoutness and piety, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

O creatures of Allah, fear Allah and anticipate your death by good actions. Purchase everlasting joy by paying transitory things: pleasures of

this world. Get ready for the journey, for you are being driven, and prepare yourselves for death, since it is hovering over you. Be a people who wake up when called and who know that this world is not their abode, and so have it changed with the next.

Certainly, Allah has not created you aimlessly nor left you as useless. There is nothing between anyone of you and Paradise or Hellfire except death that must befall him. The life that is being shortened every moment and being dismantled every hour must be regarded very short.

The hidden thing; namely, death, which is being driven to you by two over new phenomena: the day and the night, is certainly quick of approach. The traveler that is approaching with success or failure; namely, death, deserves the best of provision. So, acquire such provision from this world while you are here with which you may shield yourself tomorrow (on the Day of Judgment).

So, everyone should fear Allah, should admonish himself, should send forward his repentance, and should overpower his desire, because his death is hidden from him, his desires deceive him, and Satan is posted on him; and he beautifies for him sin so that he may commit it and prompts him to delay repentance until his desires make him the most negligent. Piety is for the negligent person whose life itself would be a proof against him and his own days passed in sin would lead him to punishment.

We ask Allah the Glorified that He may make us and you like one whom bounty does not mislead, whom nothing can stop from obedience to Allah and whom shame and grief do not befall after death. 9

Description of the transitory world

Describing this world, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

In what way shall I describe this world whose beginning is grief and whose end is destruction? 10 *The lawful actions performed here have to be accounted for, while for the forbidden ones there is punishment. Whoever is rich here faces mischief and whoever is poor gets grief. One who*

hankers after it does not get it. If one keeps away from it then it advances towards him. If one sees through it, it would bestow him sight, but if one has his eye on it then it would blind him. 11

Death and after death

The following sermon is known as Al-Gharra' (i.e. the brilliant sermon) and it is one of the most wonderful sermons of Imam Ali (‘a):

Praise be to Allah Who is High above all else, and is Near (the creation) through His bounty. He is the Giver of all reward and distinction, and Dispeller of all calamities and hardships. I praise Him for His continuous mercy and His copious bounties.

I believe in Him as He is the First of all and He is Manifest. I seek guidance from Him as He is Near and He is the Guide. I seek His succor as He is Mighty and Subduer. I depend upon Him as He is Sufficer and Supporter. And I stand witness that Muhammad (blessing of Allah be on him and his progeny) is His slave and His Prophet. He sent him for enforcement of His commands, for exhausting His pleas, and for presenting warnings against eternal punishment.

O servants of Allah, I advise you to have fear of Allah Who has furnished illustrations and Who has timed for you your lives. He has given you covering of dress 12 *and He has scattered for you livelihood, surrounded you with His knowledge.*

He has ordained rewards. He has bestowed upon you vast bounties and extensive gifts. He has warned you through far-reaching arguments, and He has counted you by numbers. He has fixed for you ages to live in this place of test and house of instruction.

You are on test in this world and you have to render account about it. Certainly, this world is a dirty watering-place and a muddy source of drinking. Its appearance is attractive and its inside is destructive. It is a deception, a vanishing reflection, and a bent pillar.

When its despiser begins to like it and he who is not acquainted with it feels satisfied with it, then it raises and puts down its feet in joy, entraps him in its trap, makes him the target of its arrows, and puts round his neck the rope of death taking him to the narrow grave and fearful abode in order to show him his place of stay and the recompense of his acts.

This goes on from generation to generation. Neither death stops from cutting them asunder nor do the survivors keep aloof from committing of sins.

They are emulating each other and proceeding in groups towards the final objective and the rendezvous of death, until when matters come to a close, the world dies and resurrection draws near. Allah 13 *would take them out from the corners of the graves, the nests of birds, the dens of beasts, and the centers of death.*

They hasten towards His command and run towards the place fixed for their final return group by group, quiet, standing, and arrayed in rows. They will be within Allah's sight and will hear every one who would call them peculiar to man, it has been particularly mentioned

They would be having the dress of helplessness and covering of submission and indignity. At this time, contrivances would disappear, desires would be cut, hearts would sink quietly, voices would be curbed down, sweat would choke the throat, fear would increase, and ears would resound with the thundering voice of the announcer calling towards the final judgment, award of recompense, striking of punishment, and paying of reward.

People have been created as a proof of His power, have been brought up with authority, they are made to die through pangs, and placed in graves where they turn into crumbs. Then, they would be resurrected one by one, awarded their recompense, and would have to account for their actions, each one separately.

They had been allowed time to seek deliverance, had been shown the right path, and had been allowed to live and seek favors, the darkness of doubts had been removed, and they had been let free in this period of life as a

training place in order to make preparation for the race on the Day of Judgment, to search for the objective with thoughtfulness, to get time necessary to secure benefits, and provide for the next place of stay.

How appropriate these illustrations and effective admonitions are provided they are received by pure hearts, open ears, firm views, and sharp wits! Fear Allah like him who listened to good advice and bowed before it; when he committed sins, he admitted it, when he felt fear, he acted virtuously, when he apprehended, he hastened towards good acts, when he believed, he performed virtuous acts, when he was asked to take lesson from the happenings of this world, he did take the lesson, when he was asked to desist, he abstained from evil, when he responded to the call of Allah, he leaned towards Him, when he turned back to evil, he repented, when he followed, he almost imitated, and when he was shown the right path, he saw it.

Such a man was busy in search of truth and got rid of the worldly evils by running away. He collected provision of good acts for himself, purified his inner self, built for the next world, and took with himself provision for the day of his departure, keeping in view his journey, his requirement, and the position of his need. He sent ahead of him for the abode of his stay in the next world.

O servants of Allah, fear Allah keeping in view the reason why He created you and be afraid of Him to the extent that He has advised you to do. Make yourself deserve what He has promised you, by having confidence in the truth of His promise and entertaining fear for the Day of Judgment.

He has made for you ears to preserve what is important, eyes to have sight in place of blindness, and limbs that consist of many smaller parts, whose curves are in proportion with the molding of their shapes and lengths of their ages, and also bodies that are sustaining themselves, and hearts that are busy in search of their food, besides other big bounties, obliging bestowals, and fortresses of safety.

He has fixed for you ages whose terms are not known to you. He has retained for you remains of the past people for your instruction. Those peo-

ple enjoyed themselves fully and they were completely unhampered. Death overtook them before satisfaction of their desires, from which the hands of death separated them. They did not provide for themselves during health of their bodies and did not take lesson during their youth.

Are these people who are in youth waiting for the back-bending old age, and those enjoying fresh health waiting for ailments, and these living persons looking for the hour of death? When the hour of departure would be close and the journey at hand, with pangs of grief and trouble, suffering of sorrows and suffocation of saliva, and the time would arrive for calling relations and friends for help and changing sides on the bed.

Could then the near ones stop death, or the mourning women do any good? He would rather be left alone in the graveyard confined to the narrow corner of his grave.

His skin has been pierced all over by reptiles, and his freshness has been destroyed by these tribulations. Storms have removed his traces and calamities have obliterated even his signs. Fresh bodies have turned thin and withered and bones have become rotten. The spirits are burdened with the weight of sins and they have become conscious of the unknown things.

But now, neither the good acts can be added to, nor evil acts can be atoned for by repentance. Are you not sons, fathers, brothers, and relations of these dead and are not to follow their footsteps and pass by their paths? But hearts are still unmoved, heedless of guidance and moving on wrong lines, as though the addressee is someone else, and as though the correct way is to amass worldly gains.

And know that you have to pass over the pathway (i.e. Sirat; the discriminating bridge between Paradise and Hellfire) where steps waver, feet slip away, and there are fearful dangers at every step.

O servants of Allah, fear Allah like the fearing of a wise man whom the thought of the next world has turned away from other matters, fear of Allah has afflicted his body with trouble and pain, his engagement in the night prayer has turned even his short sleep into awakening, hope of eter-

nal recompense keeps him thirsty in the day, abstention has curbed his desires, and remembrance of Allah is ever moving his tongue.

He entertains fear before dangers. He avoids uneven ways in favor of clear ones. He follows the shortest route to secure his purpose, wish-fulfillment does not twist his thinking, and ambiguities do not blind his eyes. He enjoys deep sleep and passes his day happily because of the happiness of good tidings and pleasure of eternal bounties.

He passes the pathway of this world in praiseworthy manner. He reaches the next world with virtues. He hastens towards virtue out of fear for vice. He moves briskly during the short time of life in this world. He devotes himself in seeking eternal good.

He runs away from evil. During today, he is mindful of tomorrow and he keeps the future in his view. Certainly, Paradise is the best reward and achievement, which hellfire is appropriate punishment and suffering. Allah is the best Avenger and Helper and the Quran is the best argument and confronter.

I enjoin upon you fear of Allah Who has left no excuse against what He has warned, has exhausted argument of guidance about the right path He has shown. He has warned you of the enemy that steals into hearts and stealthily speaks into ears, and thereby misguides and brings about destruction, makes false promises and keeps under wrong impression; he represents evil sins in attractive shape and shows as light even serious crimes.

When he has deceived his comrades and exhausted the pledge, he begins to find fault with what he presented as good, and considers serious what he had shown as light, and threatens from what he had shown as safe.

Or look at man whom Allah has created in the dark wombs and layers of curtains from what was overflowing semen, then shapeless clot, then embryo, then suckling infant, then child, and then fully grown up young man. Then He gave him heart with memory, tongue to talk, and eye to see with, in order that he may take lesson from whatever is around him, understand it, follow the admonition, and abstain from evil.

When he attained the normal growth and his structure gained its average development, he fell in self-conceit and he was perplexed. He drew bucketfuls of his desires and he was immersed in fulfilling his wishes for pleasures of the world and his sordid aims. He did not fear any evil nor was he frightened of any apprehension. He died infatuated with his vices. He spent his short life in rubbish pursuits.

He earned no reward nor did he fulfill any obligation. Fatal illness overtook him while he was still in his enjoyments and perplexed him. He passed the night in wakefulness in the hardships of grief and pricking of pains and ailments in the presence of real brother, loving father, wailing mother, and crying sister, while he himself was under maddening uneasiness, serious senselessness, fearful cries, suffocating pains, anguish of suffocating sufferings, and the pangs of death.

Thereafter, he was clad in the shroud while he remained quiet and thoroughly submissive to others. Then, he was placed on planks in such a state that he had been down-trodden by hardships and thinned by ailments. The crowd of young men and helping brothers carried him to his house of loneliness where all connections of visitors are severed.

Thereafter, those who accompanied him went away; and those who were wailing for him returned and then he was made to sit in his grave for terrifying questioning and slippery examination. The great calamity of that place is the hot water and entry into Hellfire, flames of the eternal Fire, and intensity of blazes.

There is no resting period, no gap for ease, no power to intervene, no death to bring about solace, and no sleep to make him forget pain. He rather lies under several kinds of deaths and moment- to-moment punishment. We seek refuge with Allah.

O creatures of Allah, where are those who were allowed long ages to live and they enjoyed bounty? They were taught and they learnt; they were given time and they passed it in vain; they were kept healthy and they forgot their duty. They were allowed long period of life, were handsomely provided, were warned of grievous punishment, and were promised big

rewards. You should avoid sins that lead to destruction and vices that attract the wrath of Allah.

O people who possess eyes, ears, health, and wealth; is there any place of protection, any shelter of safety, or asylum, or haven, or occasion to run away or to come back to this world? If not, 'how are you then turned away?'

And wither are you averting? By what things have you been deceived? Certainly, the share of every one of you from this earth is just a piece of land equal to his own stature and size where he would lie on his cheeks covered with dust. The present is an opportune moment for acting.

O servants of Allah, since the neck is free from the loop, and spirit is also unfettered, now you have time for seeking guidance: you are in ease of body; you can assemble in crowds, the rest of life is before you; you have opportunity of acting by will; there is opportunity for repentance and peaceful circumstances. But you should act before you are overtaken by narrow circumstances and distress, or fear and weakness, before the approach of the awaited death and before seizure by the Almighty and Powerful Lord. 14

Learning lessons

Sermonizing his companions, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

O servants of Allah, take lesson from useful items of instruction and shining indications. Be cautioned by effective items of warning. Get benefit from preaching and admonition. It is as though the claws of death are pressed in you, the connection of hope and desires has been cut asunder, hard affairs have befallen you, and your march is towards the place where everyone has to go; namely, death. Hence, 'With every person there is a driver and a witness.' The driver drives him towards resurrection while the witness furnishes evidence about his deeds. 15

Abstinence from worldly pleasures

In one of his precious sermons, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

O servants of Allah, I advise you to keep away from this world, which is shortly to leave you even though you do not like its departure and which would make your bodies old even though you would like to keep them fresh. Your example and its example are like the travelers who travel some distance and then as though they traverse it quickly or they aimed at a sign and reached it at once.

How short the distance to the aim is if one heads towards it and reaches it! Too short is the stage of one who has only a day which he cannot exceed while a swift driver is driving him in this world until he departs from it.

So, do not hanker after worldly honor and its pride, and do not feel happy over its beauties and bounties nor wail over its damages and misfortunate, because its honor and pride would end while its beauty and bounty would perish, and its damages and misfortunes would pass away. Every period in it has an end, and every living being in it is to die. Is there not for you a warning in the relics of the predecessors and an eye-opener and lesson in your forefathers, provided you understand?

Do you not see that your predecessors do not come back and the surviving followers do not remain? Do you not observe that the people of the world pass mornings and evenings in different conditions? Thus, somewhere the dead is wept for, someone is being condoled, someone is prostrate in distress, someone is enquiring about the sick, someone is passing his last breath, someone is hankering after the world while death is looking for him, someone is forgetful but he is not forgotten by death, and on the footsteps of the predecessors walk the survivors.

Beware! At the time of committing evil deeds, remember the destroyer of joys, the spoiler of pleasures, and the killer of desires (namely death). Seek assistance of Allah for fulfillment of His obligatory rights and for thanking Him for His countless bounties and obligations. 16

- 1. Abu-'Ali Al-Qali, Dhayl Al-Amali 2:54.
- 2. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 42.
- 3. Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah; Section: Du'a', pp. 274.
- 4. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 122.
- 5. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 131.
- 6. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 20.
- 7. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 28. Commenting on this paragraph, Sharif Al-Radhi says,
  If there can be an utterance which would drag by neck towards renunciation in this world and force to action for the next world, it is this sermon. It is enough to cut off from the entanglements of hopes and to ignite the flames of preaching for virtue and warning against vice. His most wonderful words in this sermon are

  'Today is the day of preparation while tomorrow is the day of race. The place to proceed to is Paradise while the place of doom is Hell.'

  Besides sublimity of words, greatness of meaning, true similes, and factual illustrations, there are wonderful secrets and delicate implications therein.

  It is his saying that he place to proceed to is Paradise while the place of doom is Hell. Here he has used two different words to convey two different meanings. For Paradise, he has used the word 'the place to proceed to,' but for Hellfire, this word has not been used. One proceeds to a place, which he likes and desires, and this can be true for Paradise only. Hellfire does not have the attractiveness that it may be liked or proceeded to. We seek Allah's protection from it.

  Since for Hellfire it was not proper to say 'to be proceeded to' Imam Ali ('a) employed the word 'doom' implying the last place of stay where one reaches even though it may mean grief and worry or happiness and pleasure. This word is capable of conveying both senses. However, it should be taken

in the sense of 'Al-masir' or 'Al-ma'al,' that is, last resort. A Quranic verse reads,

'Say thou: 'Enjoy ye (your pleasures yet a while), for your last resort is unto the hellfire. (14:30)'

Here to say 'sabqatakum' that is 'the place for you to proceed to' in place of the word 'masirakum' that is, your doom or last resort would not be proper in any way. Think and ponder over it and see how wondrous its inner implication is and how far its depth goes with beauty. Imam Ali's utterance is generally on these lines.

- 8. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 52.
- 9. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 64.
- 10. 'The beginning of the world is grief and its end is destruction.' This sentence contains the same truth which the Holy Quran has presented in the verse:

'Indeed, We have created man to dwell amidst hardship. (90:4)'

It is true that right from the narrow womb of the mother up to the vastness of the firmament, the changes of human life do not come to an end. When man first tastes life, he finds himself closed in such a dark prison where he can neither move the limbs nor change the sides. When he gets rid of this confinement and steps in this world, he has to pass through innumerable troubles.

In the beginning, he can neither speak with the tongue so as to describe his difficulty or pain nor does he possess energy in the limbs so as to accomplish his needs himself. Only his suppressed sobs and flowing tears express his needs and translate his grief and sorrow. When after the lapse of this period he enters the stage of learning and instruction, then on every step voices of admonition and abuse welcome him. All the time, he seems frightened and terrified.

When he is relieved of this period of subjugation, he finds himself surrounded by the worries of family life and livelihood, where sometimes, there is clash with comrades in profession, sometimes collision with enemies, sometimes confrontation with vicissitudes of time, sometimes attack of ailments, and sometimes shock of children, until old age approaches him with the tidings of helplessness and weakness, and eventually he bids farewell to this world with mortification and grief in the heart.

Thereafter, Imam Ali ('a) says about this world that in its lawful actions, there is the question of reckoning and in its forbidden acts, there are hardships of punishment, as a result of which even pleasant joys produce bitterness in his palate. If there is plenty of wealth and money in this world, then man finds himself in such a whirlpool of worries that he loses his joy and peace of mind. But if there is want and poverty, he is ever crying for wealth.

He who hankers after this world, there is no limit for his desires. If one's wishes are fulfilled, the desire for fulfillment of another wish crops up. This world is like the reflection. If you run after it, then it will itself run forward; but if you leave it and run away from it, then it follows you. In the same way, if a person does not run after the world, the world runs after him. The implication is that if a person breaks the clutches of greed and avarice and keeps aloof from undesirable hankering after the world, he too gets pleasures of the world and he does not remain deprived of it.

Therefore, he who surveys this world from above its surface and takes lesson from its chances and happenings and through its variation and alterations, gains knowledge about Allah's Might, Wisdom, Sagacity, Mercy, Clemency, and Sustaining power, his eyes will gain real brightness and sight. On the other hand, the person who is lost only in the colorfulness of the world and its decorations loses himself in the darkness

of the world that is why Allah has forbidden to view the world thus: 'And strain not your eyes unto that which We have provided different parties of them, of the splendor of the life of this world, so that We may try them in it; for the provision of;

Your Lord is better and more abiding. (20:131)

Quoted from Nahj Al-Balaghah, the English version.

- 11. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 81. Commenting on this sermon, Sharif Al-Radhi says,

  If a thinker thinks over this phrase of Imam Ali: 'waman ab•ara biha ba••arat-hu (If one sees through it, it would bestow him sight),' he will find thereunder very amazing meaning and far-reaching sense whose purpose cannot be appreciated and whose aim cannot be understood particularly when he joins it with the Imam's phrase: 'waman ab•ara ilayha a'mat-hu (If one has his eye on it, then it would blind him),' he would find the difference between 'ab•ara biha' and 'absara ilayha,' clear, bright, wonderful and shining.

- 12. Allah has furnished every creature with natural dress, which is the means of protecting it from cold and heat. Thus, some animals are covered in feathers and some carry apparels of wool on their bodies. But the high degree of intelligence of man and the quality of shame
  and modesty in him demands distinction from other creatures. Consequently, to maintain this distinction, he has been taught the ways of covering his body. It was this natural impulse that when Adam was made to give up his dress, he began to cover his body with leaves. The Holy Quran says,

  'So, when they tested of the tree, their shameful things were displayed unto them and they began covering themselves with leaves of the garden. (7:22)'

This was the punishment awarded for his committing what was better for him to omit. When removal of dress is punishment, its putting on would be a favor, and since this is peculiar to the man, it has been particularly mentioned.

- 13. The intention is that Allah would resurrect all the dead, even though they had been eaten by beasts and been merged in their bodies. Its aim is to refute the view of the philosophers who hold that the resurrection of the nonexistent is impossible and who do not therefore believe in the physical resurrection. Their argument briefly is that a thing, which has lost existence by death, cannot return to life.

  Consequently, after the destruction of this world, the return of any of its beings to life is out of question. But this belief is not correct, because dispersal of the parts does not mean its nonexistence so as to say that putting these parts together again would involve resurrection of the nonexistent. On the other hand, separated and dispersed parts continue to exist in some form or the other.

  Of course, in this connection, this objection has some force that when every person is to be resurrected in his own form, then in case one person has eaten the other, then in such a case it would be impossible to resurrect either of them with his own constituent parts, since this would involve creating deficiency of parts in that who had eaten the other.

  To this, metaphysicians have replied that in everybody there are some constituents which are essential and others which are non-essential. The essential constituents remain constant from the beginning until the end of life and suffer no change or alteration, and resurrection with regard to such constituents would not create any deficiency in the man who ate the other.

- 14. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 82. Sharif Al-Radhi comments, It is related that when Imam Ali (‘a) delivered this ser-

mon, people began to tremble, tears flowed from their eyes, and their hearts were frightened.

- 15. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 85.
- 16. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 99.

Aphorisms Of Imam Ali As

The aphorisms of Imam Ali (‘a) have attained the climax of brilliance in their splendor and genuineness, because they have comprised the most wonderful thoughts and manners not to mention their eloquence and fluency. Let us now refer to a few examples of these aphorisms:

True Value

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The worth of every man is in his attainments. 1

Knowledge Is Countless

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Knowledge is too much to be counted; therefore, try to take from everything the best of it. 2

Opinion Of The Aged

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The view of the aged people is more preferable than the eye-witnessing of the youths. 3

Enemies Of The Unknown

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

People are always the enemies of what they ignore. 4

Succouring The Aggrieved

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

To render relief to the grief-stricken and to provide comfort in hardship are the atonement of great sins. 5

The Abstinent

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Those who truly abstain from the worldly pleasures are those who receive sermons positively when they are said to them and who act upon their certitude. When they face an item of ease, they thank, and when they face an item of difficulty, they act steadfastly. 6

Allah’s Gifts In This World And The Other World

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Verily, Allah the Almighty and All-majestic gives the pleasures of this world to whom He loves and to whom He does not love, but He does not give the pleasures of the other world except to those whom He loves. Sometimes, He gives the pleasures of the both worlds to some people. 7

Rest And Fatigue

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Rest is very close to fatigue, misery is very close to happiness, and death is very close to life. 8

Duty Towards The Friend

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The least one can do to one’s friend is to stop at (i.e. visit) his grave. 9

The Most Helpless Of All People

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The most helpless of all men is he who cannot find a few friends during his life, but still more helpless is he who finds such a friend but loses him. 10

Sovereignty And Religiousness

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Sovereignty and religiousness are brothers of each other that none can dispense with the other. Religiousness is the basis while sovereignty is the guard. Whoever has no basis is destroyable. Whoever has not guard is lost. 11

Speech

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Had it not been that speech is always repeated, it would have run out.

The World Is Two Days

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The world has two days; one for you and the other against you. When the day is for yours, do not feel proud, but when it is against you, you should endure it. Through both of the days, you are put to the test. 12

The Ignorant And The Learned

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Two men have broken my back: an ascetic man who is yet ignorant, and a learned man who is yet dissolute. The ignorant man seduces people by means of his asceticism, and the learned man alienates them due to his dissoluteness. 13

Knowledge-Based Worship

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Acts of devotion that lack knowledge are worthless. Knowledge that lacks understanding is worthless. Reading that lacks reflection is worthless. 14

Humorous Sayings

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Seek rest for your hearts and inquire about humorous wise sayings, because, just like bodies, hearts may become bored. 15

Contemplation

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Awaken your heart by contemplation, take away your sides from sleep, and fear Allah your Lord. 16

Imploration For Forgiveness

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

I am amazed at one who leads himself to perdition while he has the means of salvation; that is imploring Almighty Allah for forgiveness.17

The Matched Things

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Fright is always matched to disappointment and shyness is always matched to deprivation. An opportunity passes just like the passing of clouds. Wisdom is the lost of the true believer; therefore, take wisdom no matter what its source should be. 18

The Soldiers Of Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The strongest of the soldiers of your Lord are ten: (1) the unshakable mountains, (2) iron, which cuts mountains, (3) fire, which melts iron, (4) water, which extinguishes fire, (5) the clouds that are made subservient between the heavens and the earth and the carry water, (6) wind, which scatters the clouds, (7) son of Adam (i.e. human beings) who can undermine wind by the covering of his dress or by anything else and thus he can keep on his way, (8) sugar, which overcomes son of Adam, (9) sleep that overcomes sugar, and (10) care, which overcomes sleep. As a result, the strongest of the creatures of Allah the Almighty and All-majestic is care. 19

The Most Favorable Act Of Worship

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The best devotional acts are silence and expectation of relief. 20

Regarding The Brethren-In-Faith

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Do not rupture your relationship with a friend on the basis of doubt, and do not alienate him before you blame him. 21

Nice Words

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He whose words are nice will incumbently acquire the other’s affection.

The Imam (‘a) then cited this poetic verse:

Such simple words like ‘good morning’ and ‘good evening’ implant affection in the heart of the noble people. 22

The Envious Are Restless

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

An envious man can never find rest. A bored man cannot be befriended. An impolite man cannot find the other’s affection. 23

The Self-Possessed

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The first prize a self-possessed person can gain due to his self-control is that all people always stand to his side against the impetuous. 24

The Discerning And The Foolish

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

It sometimes happens that a shrewd man misses the target while the foolish hits it. 25

The Ansar

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

By Allah, the Ansar nurtured Islam with their generous hands and eloquent tongues as exactly as a one-year-old calf is nurtured. 26

The Least Duty Towards Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The least of your binding duties towards Allah is that you should not use His graces to you for committing acts of disobedience to Him. 27

Disadvantages Of Disunity

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Beware of disunity, because those who separate themselves from people will be the share of Satan in the same way as a sheep that separates itself from the herd will be the share of wolves. 28

Suppression Of Rage

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Swallow your rage, because I have not seen any other swallow better than it with regard to the end result. 29

Good Mannerism

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Good mannerism is the title of the faithful believers’ Record of Deeds. 30

Beyond Illusions

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Allah is always unlike whatever can be imagined by illusions. 31

The Rabble

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

We seek Allah’s protection against the people who cannot manage any of their affairs when they gather and who are not distinguished when they scatter. 32

Categories Of People

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

People are of three types: One is the scholar and divine. Then comes the seeker of knowledge who is also on the way to deliverance. Then (lastly) come the common rot who run after every caller and bend in the direction of every wind. 33

Categories Of Quran Reciters

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The Holy Quran will be recited for three purposes: some people will recite it for the sake of Almighty Allah, another category of people will recite it for gaining worldly profits, and a third category of people will recite it for using it in disputations. However, the three categories of people will attain their purposes despite their variety. 34

Warning Against Joking

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Every joke that one makes will reduce his reason one bit. 35

Funny Wording

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Beware of mentioning any funny wording, even when you report others’ words.36

Politeness

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Good mannerism is the substitute of high lineage.

Refraining From Prohibitions

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who is keen to nobilities of character must refrain from violating the prohibitions.

The Abstinent From Worldly Pleasures

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The more pleasant the worldly pleasures are in the sight of a true abstinent, the more he becomes separated from them.

Ignorance About Defects

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The most destructive sins are to ignore about your own defects.

Perfect Chastity

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Chastity in its perfect feature lies in satisfaction with the minimum subsistence.

Good Opinion

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He about whom people have good opinion will always be under their sights.

The Most Manifest Nobility

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The most manifest aspect of nobility is to be faithful to your friends in luxury and hardship.

Characteristics Of The Lewd

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The lewd is the one who slanders when he is enraged, tells untruth when he is pleased, and beguiles when he covets.

Proper Confession

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Proper confession demolishes the outcome of sinning.

Standing The Friends’ Slips

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Tolerate the slips of your friend, because you will need him when your enemy jumps on you.

Spending That Is Never Wasted

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Your wealth that you spend on what familiarizes you with the accuracy of your state is never wasted.

Economization

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Economization is easier than immoderation, and avoidance of intruding in unconcerned affairs is more tractable than excessive interfering in the issues of others.

Oppressing People

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The worst provisions to the Promised Day are to assume oppression of people.

Appreciation Of Graces

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

An advantage that is appreciated will never expire, and a grace for which ingratitude is shown will never endure.

Good Manners

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Too many are the dignified persons whom are humiliated due to their bad manners and too many are the humble ones whom are dignified due to their good mannerism.

Experience

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who does not benefit from experiences will be easily cheated, and he who challenges the truth will be knocked down.

Termination Of Lifetime

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

If the termination of lifetimes were to be known, expectations would be reduced.

Consultation

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who counsels the men of intelligence will be shown the true way.

Satisfaction

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who satisfies himself with the little will dispense with the much, but he who does not dispense with the much will be in incessant need for the trivial.

Putting The Hopes

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who puts his hopes in a certain person will always fear him, and he who fails to recognize the reality of something will find faults with it.

Assumption Of Continuity

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who has been sure of something but suspicion occurs to him afterward must assume to continue doing what he is sure of, because cer-

tainty cannot be cancelled by suspicion.

A Faithful Believer Tires Himself

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

A true faithful believer tires himself while all people are at rest with him.

Laziness

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The lazy will not be able to carry out any of their duties towards Allah the All-exalted. Treasures of Paradise Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The following three matters are within the treasures of Paradise: (1) to conceal the alms when they are given, (2) to conceal the misfortunes, and (3) to conceal the ailment.

Need, Dispensing With, And Doing Favors

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Feel needy for a person, and you will be his prisoner. Dispense with any person and you will be equal to him. Bring any person under necessity for you and you will be his leader.

Magnanimity

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Magnanimity is part of the nobility of character, while reminding someone of the favors done to him corrupts the character.

Negligence Of Friends

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

To neglect the friends results in rupture of relationships.

Seeking For Sustenance

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Seek sustenance, for it will be guaranteed for those who seek it.

The Best Of Wealth

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The best of wealth is to forsake asking from people, while the most evil feature of poverty is to stick to submission to others.

Experiments

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Had it not been for learning from experiments, all paths would have been ambiguous.

Excessive Expectation

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who depends excessively on expectations will fall short to work.

The Most Grateful And The Least Grateful

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The most grateful of all people is the most satisfied, but the worst ungrateful for the graces is the most covetous. 37

Respite Of Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Almighty Allah gave such long respite to Pharaoh although he had claimed godhead, because it was easy (for people) to visit him and he used to serve the needy with food. 38

Mirror Of Character

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Whenever a person conceals a thing in his heart, it manifests itself through unintentional words from his tongue and through the expressions of his face. 39

Custody Of The Family Members

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

A husband can be a real custodian of his family members only after he does not care for the kind of food he provides for himself and does not care for the kind of clothing he may dress. 40

Source Of Pleasance

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Within the source of the pleasance of a person are that his wife is agreeable with him, his sons are pious, his friends are righteous, and the source of his sustenance lies in the region where his family members live.41

Generosity

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Generosity covers all defects. 42

Beauty Of Men And Beauty Of Women

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Beauty of men lies in their outward appearance, while beauty of women lies in their ornaments. 43

Evil Characteristics

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Do not be like him who does not show gratitude for what he begets and covets for increase in whatever remains with him; he orders others not to do what he himself does, and commands them to do what he himself does not do; he loves the virtuous but does not behave like them, and hates the vicious but he himself is one of them; he dislikes death because of the excess of his sins, but adheres to that because of which he is afraid of death. 44

Modesty Before The Rich

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who visits a rich man and humiliates himself before him because of his richness will have wasted two thirds of his faith. 45

Almsgiving

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

When poverty afflicts you, you must then trade with Allah through almsgiving. 46

The True Noble

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The true noble man does not humble himself when he is in hardship and does not act brutally when he is in luxury.

Repentance

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The last days of the lifetime of the faithful believer can be beyond value if he makes up what he has missed and revives what he has deadened.

This World And The Other World

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

This world is won by wealth while the other world is won by deeds.

Fear From Humiliation

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

As they fear from humiliation, people are actually driving humiliation to themselves.

Silence

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Silence is sometimes more expressive than speaking.

Patience

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Patience is a riding animal that never stumbles. 47

Verification Of The Authenticity Of Reports

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

When you hear a (reported) tradition, you must test it according to the criterion of intelligence not that of mere hearing, because relaters of knowledge are numerous but those who guard it are few.

Readiness For The Hereafter

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who recollects the distance of the journey will make preparations for it.

Significance Of Knowledge

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Knowledge dispels the excuse of those who advance excuses.

Deprivation Of Knowledge

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

When Allah intends to humiliate a person, He denies him knowledge.

Words Of The Wise

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

When the utterance of the wise is to the point, it serves as a cure; but if it is wrong, it proves like an illness.

Anger

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Anger is a kind of madness, because the victim to it regrets it afterwards. If he does not regret, his madness is confirmed.

Kind Acts

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Kind acts are more compassionate than kinship.

Recognition Of Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

I came to know Allah the Glorified through the breaking of determinations, the change of intentions, and the losing of courage.

Thanking For The Blessings

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Surely, in every blessing there is a right of Allah. If one discharges that right, Allah increases the blessing, and if one falls short of doing so, one stands in danger of losing the blessing.

Envying The Friends

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Envying the friends is an indication of ill affection.

Container Of Knowledge

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Every container becomes narrower according to what is placed in it except knowledge, which expands instead.

Doing Favours

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

If one is not grateful to you, this should not prevent you from doing good actions, because possibly such a person who has not even drawn any benefit from it will feel grateful, and his gratefulness will be more than ingratitude of the denier. Besides, Allah loves those who do good deeds.

Means Of Headship

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The effective means of headship is broad-mindedness.

The Most Humble Knowledge

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The most humble knowledge is that which remains on the tongue; and the most honorable one is that which manifests itself through the action of the limbs and the organs of the body.

Connection With Almighty Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

If man behaves properly in matters between himself and Allah, then Allah will keep proper the matters between him and the other people; and if man keeps proper the affairs of his next life, then Allah will keep proper for him the affairs of this world. Whoever is a preacher for himself is protected by Allah.

Shame Of Niggardliness

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Miserliness is shame. Cowardice is a defect. Poverty disables an intelligent man from arguing his case. A destitute person is a stranger in his hometown. Incapability is a catastrophe. Endurance is bravery. Abstinence is riches. Self-restraint is a shield against sin. The best companion is submission to Allah’s will.

Seditions

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

During disturbance, you must be like an adolescent camel that has neither a back strong enough to be ridden nor udders heavy enough to be milked.

Greed

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who adopts greed as a habit devalues himself; he who discloses his hardship agrees to humiliation; and he who allows his tongue to overpower his soul debases the soul.

Satisfaction And Knowledge

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Knowledge is a venerable estate; good manners are new dresses; and thinking is clear mirror.

Charity

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Charity is an effective cure, and the actions of people in their present life will be before their eyes in the next life.

Spending

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who is sure of a good return will be generous in giving.

Moderation

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who is moderate does not become destitute.

True Friend

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

A friend is not a true friend unless he protects his friend on three occasions: (1) when the friend is experiencing adversity, (2) when he is absent, and (3) after he dies.

The Everlasting Deeds

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

What a big difference there is between two kinds of actions: an act whose pleasure passes away, but its (ill) consequence remains; and the act whose hardship passes away but its reward endures.

Missing The Opportunity

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

To miss an opportunity brings about grief.

Piety-Accompanied Actions

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Action that is accompanied by fear of Allah does not fail, and how can a thing fail when it is accepted?

Establishing The Orders Of Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

No one can establish the rule of Allah the Glorified except one who shows no relenting in the matter of the truth, who does not behave like wrong-doers, and who does not run after objects of greed.

Care

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Half of being old aged is caused by grief.

Consequence

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

There is consequence for each person, be it sweet or bitter.

Steadfastness

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The steadfast does not miss success even if it may take a long time.

Obedience

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

On you lies the obligation of obedience to the person about whom you cannot plead the excuse of ignorance.

Despotism

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who acts solely according to his own opinion will be ruined; and he who consults other people shares in their understanding.

Concealment Of Secrets

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

He who guards his secrets retains control in his own hands.

Poverty

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Poverty is the major death.

Befriending The Foolish

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Do not associate with a fool, because he will beautify his actions before you and he will hope that you too would be like him.

Lessons

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

How many the objects of lessons are, but how few the taking of lessons is!

Starvation of the poor

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Allah the Glorified has fixed the livelihood of the destitute in the wealth of the rich. Consequently, whenever a destitute remains hungry, it is because some rich person has denied him his share. Allah the Sublime will question them about it.

Partners

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

There are two partners in the property of every person: the heirs and the vicissitudes of time.

Speech

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Have your say so that you may be known, since man is hidden under his tongue.

Forbearance

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Forbearance is a defensive tribe.

Knowledge Seekers And Worldly Pleasures Seekers

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Two categories of gluttonous people will never be sated; a seeker of knowledge and a seeker of worldly pleasures.

Forbearance And Tolerance

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Forbearance and tolerance are twins and they are the product of high courage.

The Evilest Friends

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The worst friend is he for whom formality has to be observed. 48

The Whole Asceticism

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The whole asceticism is confined between two expressions of the Quran. Allah the Glorified says, ‘Lest distress you yourselves for what escapes you, and be over-joyous for what He has granted you.’ Whoever does not grieve over what he misses and does not revel over what comes to him acquires asceticism from both its sides.

Encouragement On Doing Kind Acts

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Do kind acts and do not regard any part of kindness as small, because its smallness is big and its littleness is much. No one of you should say that another person is more deserving than he is in doing kind acts. Otherwise, by Allah, it would really be so. There are people of kind acts and

people of evil acts. When you leave either of the two, others will perform them.

Blessings Of Almighty Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Almighty Allah has particularized some of His servants with favors for benefiting the other people; therefore, He stays these favors in their hands so long as they give them to others; but when they deny them to others, He takes away the favors from them and sends them to others.

Modesty Of The Rich

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

How excellent it is for the rich to show humility before the poor for purpose of seeking reward from Allah! However, what is better than that is the haughtiness of the poor towards the rich that is based on their full confidence in Allah.

Fear Of Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Beware lest Allah sees you committing an act of disobedience to Him or misses you when it is time to do an act of obedience to Him; otherwise, you will be one of the losers. When you are strong enough, use your strength for obeying Allah, and when you are weak, be too weak to commit any act of disobedience to Allah.

Pursuit Of The Best Meaning

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Never deem evil any word that has been said by your brother-in-faith as long as you can find an acceptable excuse for it.

Moderate Care For The Family Members

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Do not devote much of your activity to your wife and your children, because if your wife and children are lovers of Allah, then He will not leave His lovers uncared for, and if they are enemies of Allah, then why should you worry and keep yourself busy about the enemies of Allah?

Beware Of Disobeying Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Beware of disobeying Allah in solitude, because the witness of that situation is also the judge.

Serving Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

A group of people worshipped Allah out of desire for reward. Surely, this is the worship of traders. Another group worshipped Allah out of fear. This is the worship of slaves. Still another group worshipped Allah out of gratefulness. This is the worship of free men. 49

- 1. Commenting on this word, Sharif Al-Radhi says, ‘This is the sentence whose value cannot be assessed, with which no wise saying can be weighed, and with which no other sentence can be matched.’
- 2. Al-Tha’alibi, Al-Tamthil wa’l-Muhasarah, pp. 165.

- 3. Al-Bayhaqi, Al-Sunan Al-Kubra 10:113.
- 4. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 172.
- 5. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 24.
- 6. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Bahjat Al-Majalis 3:301.
- 7. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Bahjat Al-Majalis 3:381.
- 8. Ibn Taghri, Al-Nujum Al-Zahirah 8:257.
- 9. Abu-kayyan Al-Tawhidi, Al-Ba•a'ir wa'l-Dhakha'ir, pp. 25.
- 10. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 2.
- 11. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Bahjat Al-Majalis 3:332.
- 12. Abu-kayyan Al-Tawhidi, Al-Basa'ir wa'l-Dhakha'ir, pp. 155.
- 13. tash Kubri Zadah, Miftah Al-Sa'adah wa-Misbah Al-Siyadah 1:49.
- 14. Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 1:77.
- 15. Yaqut Al-kamawi, Mu'jam Al-Udaba' 1:94.
- 16. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Bahjat Al-Majalis 1:115.
- 17. Ibn Taghri, Al-Nujum Al-Zahirah 2:123.
- 18. Abu-'Ali Al-Qali, Al-Amali 3:94.
- 19. Abu-'Ali Al-Qali, Dhayl Al-Amali, pp. 174.
- 20. Al-Jahis, Al-Bayan wa'l-Tabyin 1:297.
- 21. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 2:309.
- 22. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 2:310.
- 23. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 2:319.
- 24. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 2:281.
- 25. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:157.
- 26. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 475.
- 27. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:319
- 28. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar. 4:140.
- 29. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 2:28.
- 30. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 2:50.
- 31. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 2:57.
- 32. Al-Jahis, Al-Rasa'il 1:253.
- 33. Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 2:294.
- 34. Abu-Bakr Al-Baghdadi, Akhlaq Hamalat Al-Quran, pp. 60.
- 35. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:167.
- 36. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:167.

- 37. All the previous sayings that are not footnoted are quoted from Shaykh Al-Mufid's Kitab Al-Irshad.
- 38. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:245.
- 39. Al-Qalqashandi, Subh Al-A'sha 7:267.
- 40. Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 7:306.
- 41. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Bahjat Al-Majalis 1:221.
- 42. tash Kubri Zadah, Miftah Al-Sa'adah wa-Misbah Al-Siyadah 1:54.
- 43. Al-Jahis, Al-Bayan wa'l-Tabyin 2:88.
- 44. Al-Jahis, Al-Bayan wa'l-Tabyin 2:111.
- 45. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:149.
- 46. Abu-kayyan Al-Tawhidi, Al-Basa'ir wa'l-Dhakha'ir, pp. 37.
- 47. All of the previous sayings that are not footnoted are quoted from Al-Tha'alibi's Al- Tamthil wa'l-Muhasarah, pp. 30.
- 48. Commenting on this aphorism, Sharif Al-Radhi says, 'This is because formality is inseparable from hardship and it is an evil that is caused by a comrade for whom formality is observed. Consequently, he is the worst of all friends.'
- 49. All the previous sayings that are not footnoted are quoted from Nahj Al-Balaghah.

Imam Ali And Judgment

Islam is the most blissful grace that Almighty Allah has conferred upon His servants. It is the very illumination that guides them to the straightest path in order to set aright their crookedness, reclaim their affairs, and spread security and stability in their associations and communities.

Through its brilliant contents and articles, the message of Islam aims at raising the level of the human behavior, discipline, and moral standards, keeping humanity away from all motives of retardation, and bringing up human beings on such a noble and upright upbringing that is prevailed by awareness and feelings of

the necessity for carrying out all the duties towards themselves, their families, and their communities.

Thus, Islam prevents humanity from falling in the abysmal mazes of the unexplored aspects of life that are founded on chaos and disputes that make man live under horror, and experience poverty and deprivation.

However, all of the other heavenly revealed religions and social doctrines, when legislating laws, have not hit upon all the issues and affairs of humanity; rather, they adopted certain aspects of life without full comprehension.

Thanks to Almighty Allah, Islam, on the other hand, through its religion- based and positive laws and regulations, has had a handle on all affairs of humanity, deciding for them such decisive solutions that uproot any social disease, eliminate all problems, and leave no single gap unsealed.

One of the most inspired legislations of Islam in the field of social and individual reformation is that it has created strong ties between the Muslim communities when it established fraternity ties between each couple of Muslims and decided that the religious brotherhood is stronger than lineal brotherhood.

According to this law, Muslims are true brothers of each other and each Muslim must love for his brother-in-faith whatever he loves for himself and hates for him whatever he hates for himself. Islam then decided that Muslims should act as the eye and guide of each other.

Unfortunately, had this brotherly spirit endured among Muslims, they would certainly have saved themselves from disputes and clashes, the doors of courts would have been closed, and the offices of lawyers would have been covered with curtains.

When the Holy Prophet (S) established his government in Yathrib, he formed a judicial council in the Mosque, because judgment be-

tween litigants was part of his message that aimed at protecting the rights, guaranteeing the benefits of people, and giving social justice free hand to prevail on the community.

The Holy Prophet (S) assumed judgment between people and ruled according to the revelations of Almighty Allah. He thus established the foundations of judgment, developed its methods, consolidated its issues, and declared the functions of both the plaintiffs and the defendants. Of course, this act is considered one of the most wonderful fields of development in human life.

The Islamic judgment, along with its legislations and laws, is one of the repertories of the Islamic thought from which jurisprudents all over the world quoted many of their laws. The Islamic judgment is characterized by its independence and non-submission to any of the ruling authorities. Besides, it is obligatory upon all authorities, including the supreme authority, to submit to whatever is issued by the judicial power.

It goes without saying that the prosperity of any nation is contingent upon the decency of judicature, which is expected to spread public security, put off all sorts of transgression and wronging, and smooth out justice. Conversely, if judicature is corrupt and passive to external factors, crime will be prevalent, intellectual and social paralysis will cover up the community, and chaos and indifference will spread to remove any sort of security in the society.

In the following lines, we will discuss the judgment of Imam Ali (‘a) who was the founder of the majority of the principles of jurisprudence and was the most brilliant Muslim personality in the field of judicature.

He (‘a) could solve the most complicated problems, removed ambiguity, revealed the truth, and did away with all confusions. As a result, scholars of law and judges were the first to be highly admired by the Imam (‘a) and to derive from him very much infor-

mation related to judging between the litigants and putting their hands on the truth.

During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali (‘a) assumed the office of judicature when he was sent to Yemen. However, the Holy Prophet (S) did not need to put Imam Ali (‘a) to the test with regard to his experience in this field, because he was sure of that; rather, he only supplied him with some advices concerning the etiquette of judgment. Thus, the Holy Prophet (S) said to him,

When the two parties of a lawsuit present themselves before you, you should not issue a verdict before you listen to both of them in the same way. If you do so, it will be easy for you to issue a fair judgment.

Imam Ali (‘a), commenting on this advice, said,

Since then, I could master the job of judgment and I have never suspected any issue. 1

Imam Ali (‘a) distinguished himself in the fields of judgment and issuance of verdicts so highly that none could ever match him. Accordingly, the Holy Prophet (S) awarded him such a superb medal that distinguished him from the other Companions when he declared,

Ali is the most versed in the field of judgment of all of you. 2

Historicists state that Imam Ali (‘a) was the supreme referential authority in the fields of judgment and verdicts during the reigns of the first three caliphs who never violated his view in any case. More specifically, the second caliph ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab depended totally upon Imam Ali (‘a) in the issues of jurisprudence and judgment that were provided before him so much so that he declared more than once that he would have perished if Ali had not been there to save him.

The excellence of Imam Ali's judgment amazed many of the ancient and modern scholars and instigated them to compile books that comprised all issues related to the Imam's adjudication and judgmental decrees. Let us now list some of these books:

(1) Qasaya Amir Al-Mu'minin by Muhammad ibn Qays Al-Bujali, one of the companions of Imam Al-Sadiq and Imam Al-Kazim.3

(2) Qasaya Al-Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin by Al-Mu'alla ibn Muhammad Al- Basri.4

(3) 'Aja'ib Ahkam Al-Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin by Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Ibrahim (a manuscript).

(4) 'Aja'ib Ahkam wa-Qasaya wa-Masa'il Amir Al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi- talib Al-'Ajibah by Sayyid Muhsin Al-Amin (published in AH 366).

(5) Qasaya Amir Al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talibby Shaykh Muhammad Taqi Al-Tustari (published by Al-Matba'ah Al-kaydariyyah Press in AH 1373).

The issues of Imam Ali ('a) in judgment and adjudication reveal the broadness of his knowledge, his unmatched scientific faculties, and his capability to solve the most complicated issues that all judges could not solve.

Before presenting the judgmental issues that Imam Ali ('a) encountered and solved marvelously, let us have a short pause with some secondary issues related to adjudication and judgment.

Significance Of Adjudication

About the significance of the office of judge, Imam Ali ('a) said to Shurayh the judge,

O Shurayh, you have sit in a place that none should assume except a prophet, a successor of a prophet, or, otherwise, a man bringing to himself wretchedness. 5

Imam Ali ('a) paid very much attention to the issue of judgments; he therefore ordered Shurayh the judge not to execute any of his verdicts before showing them to the Imam ('a) so that the Imam would be sure of the accuracy of the sentence.6

In the field of the etiquettes of judging between people, it is reported that a Jew, once, disputed with Imam Ali ('a) about an armor he claimed to have been his. 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, who was the judge in this case, said to the Imam ('a) in the court, 'O Abu'l-Hasan, you may stand up next to your litigant.' This word upset the Imam ('a) very much that the impression was clear on his face.

When the trial was over, 'Umar asked the Imam ('a) about the reason for his anger. The Imam ('a) answered,

'You have not regarded me equal to the Jew. You have called me by surname and have not done the same to him!'

Imam Ali's Judgments During The Holy Prophet's Lifetime

Imam Ali ('a) was appointed by the Holy Prophet (S) as the chief judge of Yemen. Before he had left, the Imam ('a) said to the Holy Prophet (S),

O Allah's Messenger, you are sending me to assume this office while I am still too young to gain mastery in adjudication.

The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

Set out! Allah shall guide your heart and fix your tongue on the truth. 7 *Waki', a famous writer and judge, says, 'The most prominent of all*

judges is Ali ibn Abi Talib, because the Holy Prophet (S) entrusted him with the office of judge during his lifetime.' 8

Admired by the judgments of Imam Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

All praise be to Allah Who has endued us the Ahl Al-Bayt with wisdom. 9

Imam Ali ('a), describing the trials of the Holy Prophet (S), says,

When two men litigated before the Messenger of Allah (S), he would say to the plaintiff, 'Do you have a proof?' If the plaintiff provided an accepted and admitted proof, the Holy Prophet (S) would pass judgment against the defendant, but if the plaintiff could not provide a proof, then the defendant would take an oath by Allah to prove the falsity of the litigation of the plaintiff against him.

If witnesses were brought, the Holy Prophet (S) would ask them about their tribes, quarters, and houses. If they answered, he would order the parties of litigation and the witnesses to stop before him. He then ordered the clerk to write down the names of the plaintiff, the defendant, and the witnesses and the details of their testimonies.

He would then give a copy of these records to two of his virtuous companions and order each of them separately, so that the other one would not know, to go to the tribes, marketplaces, quarters, and houses of the witnesses and ask about them.

If the two secret agents brought good news from these places, the Holy Prophet (S) would then summon the witnesses and the people who had praised them and ask the praising people to identify the witnesses. If they identified the witnesses acceptably and confirmed their words of praise of them, the Holy Prophet (S) would then pass a judgment against the defendant according to the testimonies of the witnesses.

On the other hand, if the secret agents came with bad news, they Holy Prophet (S) would summon the people who had dispraised the witnesses

and ask them to identify them. He would then summon the witnesses.

If it was proved, in this way, that their testimonies had been false, he would not expose them to scandal, reproach them, or carp at them; rather, he would insistently encourage the litigants to make peace with one another so that the witnesses would not be exposed to scandal. The Holy Prophet (S) was very kind, compassionate, and merciful to his people.

If the witnesses were not recognized (i.e. they had no tribe, marketplace, quarter, and house), the Holy Prophet (S) would ask the defendant, 'What is your opinion about them?' If the defendant confirmed that he had not seen anything evil from them but their testimony had not been accurate, the Holy Prophet (S) would admit their testimonies, but if the defendant censured and condemned them, the Holy Prophet (S) would try his best to make peace between the two litigants, order the defendant to take an oath, and cut off their dispute. 10

Who Is The Father?

A group of men shared in purchasing a she-slave and they all copulated with her in the same period of her purity from menstruation. She was thus pregnant. When she gave birth to a male baby, each one of the men claimed the baby to have been his son. They provided the case before Imam Ali ('a) who cast lots and decided the father of the baby accordingly.

He then sentenced the father to the payment of the two thirds of the amount of the blood money to the other partners. The Imam ('a) reproached them and warned against interfering in such matters. When the judgment was provided before the Holy Prophet (S), he, praising Imam Ali's sagacity, said,

All praise be to Allah Who made one of us the Ahl Al-Bayt pass judgment according to the laws of Prophet David. 11

A Pit Dug For A Lion

It is reported that a lion fell into a pit that was made to trap it. When people crowded on the edge of the pit to look at the lion, a man jumped on the edge of the pit and his foot slipped. Trying to save himself, he hung to another man who hung to a third one who hung to a fourth one and all of them fell in the pit. As a result, they all preyed upon to death by the lion.

Their heirs disagreed about the blood money that should be paid to each one of them; they therefore submitted the case before Imam Ali (‘a) who decided that the heirs of the first man should pay one third of the blood money to the second man, the heirs of the second man should pay two thirds to the heirs of the third man, and the heirs of the third man should pay a whole blood money to the heirs of the fourth man.

When the judgment was transferred to the Holy Prophet (S), he said,

Abu’l-Hasan has judged among them with the judgment of Allah the Almighty and All-majestic.

The Three She-Slaves

Playfully, a slave girl shouldered another slave girl and a third slave girl pinched the one who carried the second girl on her shoulder, causing her to drop her. She thus fell to the ground and died.

When this case was provided before Imam Ali (‘a), he judged that the pinching slave girl should undergo one third of the blood money while the shouldering slave girl should also undergo one third and the remaining one third of the blood money should be cancelled, because the dead girl had climbed the shoulder of the second girl in a meaningless way.

When this judgment was transferred to the Holy Prophet (S), he decided to pass it.12

The Killed Under The Wall

A wall fell on a group of people and killed them. Among them, there was a slave woman with her child and a free woman with her child, too. The father of the free woman's child was free while the father of the slave woman's child was slave. Hence, the free child was not distinguished from the slave.

When the issue was provided before Imam Ali ('a), he judged between them according to lot that would be cast. He thus judged that the child on whom the lot of freedom fell would be free while the child on whom the lot of slavery fell would be slave. He then decided the enslaved child to be freed. He also judged that the free child would be subjected to the laws of inheritance.

When this judgment was transferred to the Holy Prophet (S), he decided to pass it.13

A Cow That Killed A Donkey

Two men brought a dispute before the Holy Prophet (S) about a cow that had killed a donkey. One of the men said, 'O Allah's Messenger, this man's cow has killed my donkey.'

The Holy Prophet (S) ordered,

'Go to Abu-Bakr and ask him to judge between you.'

They came to Abu-Bakr and told him their story. He asked,

'Why have you left the Messenger of Allah (S) and come to me?'

They answered, 'He told us to do that.'

Abu-Bakr said, 'A beast has killed a beast and therefore its owner has no responsibility for the dead beast.'

They returned to the Holy Prophet (S) and told him of that. He said to them,

'Go to 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab and tell him your story. Ask him for a judgment about it.'

They went to 'Umar and told him their story. He asked, 'Why have you left the Messenger of Allah (S) and come to me?'

They answered, 'He told us to do so.'

'Umar further asked, 'Why did he not tell you to go to Abu-Bakr?'

They answered, 'We were ordered to do that; therefore, we went to him.' 'Umar enquired, 'What did he say to you about this case?'

They thus informed him about Abu-Bakr's reply.

'Umar thus said, 'My view agrees with Abu-Bakr's.'

They returned to the Holy Prophet (S) and gave him a report of that.

The Holy Prophet (S) instructed,

'Go to Ali ibn Abi Talib so that he may judge between you.'

They went to Imam Ali ('a) and told him their story.

The Imam ('a) thus judged,

'If the cow entered into the stable of the donkey, then the owner of the cow must pay the price of the donkey to its owner. But if the donkey entered into the stable of the cow, and the cow killed it, the owner of the donkey has no payment due from the owner of the cow.'

The two men went back to the Holy Prophet (S) and told him about Imam Ali's judgment between them. The Holy Prophet (S) said,

Ali ibn Abi Talib has given the same judgment of Allah the All-exalted. All praise be to Allah Who has created among us the Ahl Al-Bayt one who can give judgment in the manner of Prophet David. 14

Imam Ali's Judgments In The Reign Of Abu-Bakr

Ignorance About The Law

It is reported that a man was brought before Abu-Bakr. The man had drunk wine; so, Abu-Bakr decided to administer the prescribed punishment of drinking intoxicants on him. However, the man pleaded, 'I drank it without having knowledge that it was forbidden, because I grew up among people who regarded it as lawful. I have not known that it was forbidden until now.'

Abu-Bakr failed to deliver a decision in the matter. He did not know the way to judge him. Some of the present persons advised him to seek information from Imam Ali ('a) about the decision in that matter.

He sent someone to ask him about it. Imam Ali ('a) advised,

'Tell two trustworthy Muslims to go around the gatherings of the Muhajirun and the Ansar to ask them whether any of them had recited to the man the Quranic verse about the forbiddance of intoxicants or had reported it to him on the authority of the Holy Prophet (S). If two of them testify that the man had been informed about the forbiddance of wine, then he should be subjected to the prescribed punishment. If no one testifies, Abu-Bakr should order the man to repent and let him go.'

Abu-Bakr did so. No one of the Muhajirun or the Ansar gave evidence that they had recited the Quranic verse forbidding wine or had reported it to him on the authority of the Holy Prophet (S). So, Abu-Bakr asked man to repent and then let him go.15

Wet Dream

One man said to another, 'I have wet dreamt of your mother!' This word enraged the man so intensely that he went to Abu-Bakr and complained against the other. Abu-Bakr was too confused to solve the issue; he therefore asked Imam Ali ('a) for a solution. The Imam ('a) answered,

'You may lead the man under sunlight and execute the lashing punishment to his shadow, because dream is just like shadow. However, we should whip that man in a disciplinary way so that he would stop injuring Muslims.' 16

Imam Ali's Judgments In The Reign Of 'Umar

The Story Of Qudamah Ibn Mas'un

'Umar ibn Al-Khattab decided to execute the penal law of drinking wine on Qudamah ibn Mas'un, but the latter said to 'Umar, 'I should not be subjected to the penal law, because Allah says in the Quran, 'On those who believe and do good deeds there is no blame for what they eat, when they are careful of their duty and believe and do good deeds, then they are careful of their duty and believe, then they are careful of their duty and do good to others; and

Allah loves those who do good to others. (5:93)''

Thus, 'Umar stopped executing the punishment on him.

When Imam Ali ('a) was informed, he criticized 'Umar and asked him,

'Why have you refrained from executing the punishment on Qudamah after he had drunk wine?'

'Umar answered that Qudamah recited a Quranic verse that might bear an indication of exception of states like his. However, Imam Ali ('a) clarified the matter by saying,

Neither Qudamah nor any one who follows him in committing what Allah has deemed forbidden is included with those mentioned in the holy Quranic verse involved. Those who believe and do good deeds never violate any prohibition.

Now, you must summon Qudamah and order him to repent from what he had claimed. If he repents, then you must execute the penal law on him. If he does not repent, then you must sentence him to death penalty, because he has abandoned the religion.

'Umar, having consented to the Imam's words, summoned Qudamah who repented from what he had said. So, 'Umar warded off the death penalty from him. However, he did not know how to execute the penal law on Qudamah; he therefore sought the advice of Imam Ali ('a) who instructed him to lash him eighty lashes. So, 'Umar did.[17]

False Accusation Of Adultery

A man who used to travel frequently had owned a slave girl. When the slave girl attained puberty, the man's wife feared lest her husband would marry the slave girl. She therefore gathered some other women and ordered them to grasp the slave girl so forcibly that she would be able to deflower her with her finger and accuse her of committing adultery.

The women then did and testified to the false claim of the wife. When the case was brought before 'Umar by the husband, 'Umar did not know what to do. He therefore led the slave girl, the man, and the other women to Imam Ali ('a) and asked for a solution.

The Imam ('a) first asked the man's wife whether she could provide evidence. The wife answered, 'I have witnesses. My neigh-

bors testify to my claim.'

The Imam ('a) ordered these women to be present before him. Once they came, he unsheathed his sword and put it in front of him. He then summoned the man's wife, who insisted on her claim. He then ordered her to go back home. He then summoned one of the other women, rested on his knees, and said to her,

'Do you know me? I am Ali ibn Abi Talib. This is my (famous) sword. The man's wife has just said what she had said, and retreated from her claim to say the truth. I guaranteed immunity for her. If you now will not tell me of the whole truth, I will fill up the sword with your blood.'

The woman turned her face towards 'Umar and said, 'Grant me immunity (from killing) so that I will say the truth.'

The Imam ('a) said,

'So, tell the truth.'

The woman thus said, 'No, by Allah. The man's wife saw the beauty and attraction of the slave girl and feared lest this would seduce her husband into her. She therefore forced the slave girl to drink an intoxicating drink and deflowered her with her finger.'

Upon hearing this, Imam Ali ('a) shouted,

'Allah is the Most Great! I am the first to separate between the witnesses after Prophet Daniel.'

The Imam ('a) then sentenced the man's wife to the punishment of false accusation and sentenced the other women to the payment of compensation amount of four hundred dirhams. He also ordered the man to divorce his wife and marry the slave girl.[18]

False Accusation

A woman was very fond of a young man from the Ansar who was too chaste to respond to her frequent seductions. When she despaired of any response, she took an egg, poured its albumen on her dress and between her thighs, and the came to 'Umar claiming that the young man had led her to a certain place and raped her.

Immediately, 'Umar summoned the young man and decided to punish him. The young man begged 'Umar and asked him to investigate the case. 'Umar then turned his face towards Imam Ali ('a) and asked, 'O Abu'l-Hasan, what do you think?'

When the Imam ('a) looked at the white of the egg, he suspected it. He therefore ordered that some boiling water should be brought to him. He poured the boiling water on the place of the white of the egg and it turned white. He took piece of it and put it on his tongue to discover its reality. He then insisted on the woman to tell the truth and she finally did.[19]

Disavowal Of A Son

A young man complained to 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab against a woman whom he claimed to be his mother while she disavowed him. When 'Umar summoned her, she came along with her four brothers and other forty persons who were ready to swear that she had no family relation with that young man and that she was still unmarried.

Imam Ali ('a), who was present, asked 'Umar to permit him judging between the two litigants. 'Umar shouted, 'How strange this is! How can I not permit you judging in this case after I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, 'The most knowledgeable of all of you is Ali ibn Abi Talib?''

The Imam ('a) turned his face towards the woman and asked,

'Do you have witnesses?'

'Yes, I do,' she said.

The witnesses thus testified to the woman.

The Imam (‘a) said to the attendants,

‘This day, I will issue such a judgment that will please the Lord from above His Throne. I learnt it from my dear the Messenger of Allah (S).’

He then said to the woman,

‘Do you have a guardian?’ 20

She answered, ‘Yes, I do. My guardians are these brothers of mine.’

The Imam (‘a) then said to her brothers,

‘Do you allow me to decide about your sister and you?’

‘Yes, we do,’ they answered.

The Imam (‘a) thus said,

‘I call Allah and the Muslims who are attendant to witness that I have given this woman to this young man in marriage with a dowry of four hundred dirhams, which I will pay.’

He (‘a) then shouted at his servant,

‘O Qambar, bring me four hundred dirhams.’

Qambar thus fetched the dirhams and the Imam (‘a) immediately put them in the hand of the young man to pay them as dowry to the woman and ordered him to prepare himself for the wedding party. The young man did what Imam Ali (‘a) had ordered him and ordered the woman to accompany him.

Immediately, the woman cried out of fear, ‘This is the Fire! This is the Fire! O cousin of Muhammad, do you want to give me in marriage to my own son? By Allah, this young man is my son. My brothers gave me in marriage to a man whose tribe was not

known (i.e. of no good reputation among the other tribes). So, I gave birth to this young man. When he became young, my brothers ordered me to disavow and reject him. By Allah, this young man is my son.'21

The Widow Of An Old Man

A woman was given in marriage to an old man who died after he had copulated with her. He thus impregnated her and she gave birth to a male baby. The other sons of the old man claimed that the woman was adulteress and the baby was not their half-brother. Accepting their claim, 'Umar decided to stone her to death.22 When Imam Ali ('a) passed by the woman, she sought his help, saying, 'O cousin of Allah's Messenger, I have my own evidence.'

The Imam ('a) ordered her to be brought before him. She gave him a written document in which the date of her marriage and the date of her husband's death were registered. The next day, Imam Ali ('a) ordered the sons of the dead old man to be present before him. He then asked them to bring a group of boys including the son of that woman.

He then said to the boys, 'Now, you can play.' As they played for a while, the Imam ('a) ordered them to have a rest. He then ordered them to play again. When they tried to stand up, the Imam ('a) noticed that the son of the second young wife stood up after he had leaned on the palms of his hands. Conclusively, the Imam ('a) decided that the boy should have his share from the inheritance of the old man, his father, and ordered that the brothers should be lashed.

This decision astonished 'Umar very much that he asked, 'How could you reach such conclusion.'

The Imam ('a) answered, 'I saw the weakness of the old man in the leaning of the boy on the palms of his two hands while he was

trying to stand up.[23]

Two Women Claiming A Male Child

Two women quarreled over a male child, each claiming him to be her son. 'Umar sent for Imam Ali ('a) and requested him to solve the strange problem. The Imam ('a) tried to persuade the women to come out with the truth. He reminded them of the punishment for false testimony in this world and in the next.

When neither of the women yielded, Imam Ali ('a) said,

'Now, I have no option but to send for my sword.'

The women asked,

'What will you do with a sword?'

Imam Ali ('a) replied,

'It is but proper that I do justice by cutting the baby into two halves and give one half to each of you!'

One of the women said, 'By Allah, O Abu'l-Hasan! Do not do it. I made a mistake. The child is not mine but he belongs to my rival. I relinquish my claim.' Imam Ali ('a) praised the Lord and said,

'The child belongs to you. As the mother of the child, you could not bear to see the child being harmed. The other woman had no such feeling because she was not the mother of the child.'

This is a wonderful conclusion, because the boy has inherited weakness from his father whose agedness caused him physical weakness.

Upon this, the other woman admitted that she was not the mother of the child.

'Umar was very pleased with the outcome and he blessed and prayed for Imam Ali ('a).24

A Crazy Woman Committing Adultery

During the reign of 'Umar, a man seduced a mad woman into adultery. Evidence for that was established against her; therefore, 'Umar ordered her to be flogged according to the prescribed punishment. She was brought past Imam Ali ('a) on her way to be flogged.

'Why is the mad woman of the family of so-and-so being dragged along?'

he asked. 'A man seduced her and fled and the evidence of fornication has been established against her. So, 'Umar ordered her to be flogged,' he was told.

'Take her back to him,'

Imam Ali ('a) told them, 'and ask him:

Do you not know that this is a mad woman and the Messenger of Allah (S) has said, 'The order of punishment should be withheld from the mad person until he recovers?' Her reason and her soul have been overcome.'

She was taken back to 'Umar and he was told what Imam Ali ('a) had said.

'Umar said, 'Allah has rescued me from it. I was almost destroyed through whipping her.' He thus withdrew the prescribed punishment from her.25

Five Different Punishments For A Single Offence

Five persons were arrested on charges of adultery and brought before 'Umar who ordered all of them to be stoned to death. Imam Ali ('a) who was then present in the assembly protested that the

judgment was illegal. 'Umar asked the Imam ('a) to decide the matter, and the Imam ('a) ordered one of them to be sentenced to death, the second to be stoned, the third to be flogged, the fourth to suffer half the penalty, and the fifth to be admonished and let off.

This decision surprised 'Umar and the rest of the gathering. 'Umar thus asked, 'How come you imposed different sentences in respect of a single offence?' Imam Ali ('a) replied,

'The first one was a Dhimmi (a non-Muslim enjoying the protection of the Muslim government) and by committing the offence, he lost the protection given to a Dhimmi and thus became liable to be sentenced to death penalty.

The second was a married man and the punishment for committing adultery by a married man is to be stoned to death. The third was a bachelor and his punishment is to be whipped. The fourth was a bondsman and therefore he was to suffer only half the penalty. The last one was an insane person and he is thus exempted from any punishment.' 26

Adultery Under Compulsion

It is reported that witnesses gave evidence against a woman that they had found her at one of the watering places of the Bedouins and a man who was not her husband was having intercourse with her. 'Umar ordered her to be stoned because she had a husband (i.e. married). She declared, 'O Allah, You know that I am innocent.'

'Do you impugn the witnesses as well?' remarked 'Umar.

Imam Ali ('a), who was present, said,

'Let them bring her back and let them question her. Perhaps, she has an excuse.'

She was brought back and questioned about the circumstances of what she had done. She said, 'My family had some camels. I went out with my family's camels and took with me some water. There was no milk in the camels.

A neighbor of ours had camels with him and there was milk in his camels. The water I had had with me was used up and I asked him to give me a drink. He refused to give me a drink unless I submitted myself to him. I refused. When my life was about to depart, I submitted myself to him unwillingly.'

Imam Ali ('a) shouted,

'Allah is the Most Great. Whoever is compelled to do something without desiring to do it is not a transgressor and no sin is counted against him. This is what Allah the Almighty and All-majestic has declared. You must now free her, because she was neither transgressor nor desirous for committing the sin.' Upon hearing so, 'Umar freed her. 27

The Punishment Of The Absent From Their Wives

'Umar ordered to stone to death a man from Mina who had committed adultery with a woman from Al-Madinah. However, Imam Ali ('a) said to 'Umar,

'This man is not liable to the punishment of stoning to death, because he is absent from his wife who lives in another city. In such cases, the punishment of lashing must be applied.' 28

A Three-Time Larceny

A larcener was brought before 'Umar who had already ordered of cutting his hand once and his leg at the second time, because he committed larceny for the second time. Because this time was the third, 'Umar decided to sentence the larcener to death. However, Imam Ali ('a) intruded and said,

'Do not sentence him to death penalty, because you have already cut off his hand and leg. Rather, you should detain him.' 29

The Two Cheaters

Two men entrusted one hundred dinars with a woman from the tribe of Quraysh, stipulating that she should deliver the amount only if the two of them came together to claim it and that at no cost should she give the amount if only one of them came to claim it. After about a year, one of them came and claimed the amount stating that his friend was dead. The woman refused to give the money stating that as per the stipulation both have to come together and receive the money.

The man argued that in view of the death of one of them, the stipulation did not stand any more and that it was unreasonable and unjust to demand the production of a dead person. Cornered by the persistent demand and arguments, the woman delivered the amount. A year later, the second man came and demanded the amount. The woman replied, 'Your friend had forced me to give the money stating that you were dead. How can I now pay you again?'

The man said, 'You should not have paid the money to him when he came alone, particularly when we had stipulated that the money should be paid only if the two of us came together. You should at least have insisted on the proof of my alleged death, like I am doing now.'

The man produced evidence of his friend's death. He took the woman to 'Umar and wanted him to punish her for breach of trust. 'Umar asked the woman, 'Did you receive the money in trust on the stipulation alleged by this man?' The woman became frightened and said, 'I beseech you not to judge this case. Instead, ask Ali to decide the matter.'

'Umar sent for Imam Ali ('a) who heard the entire dispute. He realized that the two men had played fraud on the woman. However, he asked the man to fear Allah and tell the truth. The man persisted on his demand. Then, Imam Ali ('a) said,

'Is it not true that you stipulated that the amount should be paid only if both of you came together?'

The man replied in the affirmative. Imam Ali ('a) said,

'Then, go and bring your friend. We shall then pay you the amount.'

The man ran away with disappointment.

Hearing this, 'Umar praised the Lord and thanked Imam Ali ('a) saying, 'O Lord! Let 'Umar not survive a day without Ali.'30

Stoning A Pregnant

A pregnant woman who had committed adultery was brought before 'Umar who ordered her to be stoned. Imam Ali ('a), who was present, said,

'If you have the right to stone her, then you do not have the right to take action against what is in her womb. Allah the All-exalted says,

'Nor does any bearer of a burden bear the burden of another.''(35:18)

'Umar declared, 'May I never live to see a problem with which Abu'l-Hasan is not competent to deal.'

Then, 'Umar asked the Imam ('a), 'What shall I do with her?'

The Imam ('a) instructed,

'Take care of her until she gives birth. When she has given birth and you have found someone to nurse her child, then administer the prescribed punishment on her.' 31

Purchasing A Camel

At Mina, 'Umar ordered Anas to purchase some camels for him, and Anas did. The seller then refused to hand the camels over to 'Umar along with their saddles and saddlecloths, saying, 'I sold you these camels bare.' The two litigated before Imam Ali ('a) who said,

'If you have stipulated that the saddles and the saddlecloths would be within the deal, then they must be yours, but if you have not, then they are the seller's.'

'Umar said, 'In fact, I have not specified such stipulation.'

Hence, 'Umar gave back the saddles and the saddlecloths to the seller.32

Distribution Of The Public Funds

An amount of the public fund was brought to 'Umar, who decided to distribute it among the Muslims. A little amount of it remained, and 'Umar took counsel with his companions as to what he should do with it. They suggested that he would take it for himself, because the amount was too little to be distributed among them. However, Imam Ali ('a) objected and said,

'Distribute it among them no matter how much of it the share of each one of them will be. The little of the public funds must be treated as same as the much amount of it.' 33

Divorcement Before And After Islam

A man presented this case before 'Umar:

'Before Islam, I had divorced my wife once and in Islam, I divorced her twice in addition to that one. What do you judge in this issue?'

'Umar was too confused to give any answer; he therefore waited for the coming of Imam Ali ('a) and when he came, he provided the case before him. The Imam ('a) said,

'Islam demolishes every act that was done before embracing it.'

Thus, the Imam ('a) adjudged the earliest time of divorce as null, because it took place before conversion to Islam.[34]

Abortion On Account Of Fear

'Umar once summoned a woman who had been conversing with men at her house. When his messengers came to her, she was frightened and afraid. She had a miscarriage and her child fell to the ground crying, but it then died. When he was informed, 'Umar gathered the Companions and asked them about the law concerning this issue. They all said, 'We consider that you were acting correctly. You only wanted to establish the truth and there is no blame for anything against you in it.'

Imam Ali ('a) was sitting without saying anything about that. However,

'Umar asked him, 'What is your view about this, Abu'l-Hasan?' 'You have heard what they said,' Imam Ali ('a) answered.

'Yet, what is your view?'

Umar insisted.

Imam Ali ('a) replied,

'The people have said what you heard.'

'Umar further insisted, 'I adjure you to give your view.'

Imam Ali ('a) thus spoke,

'If people have been trying to come close to you, they have deceived you. If they thought about their advice, then they have disregarded the fact that the blood money is required to be paid by you, because you were the one responsible for the death of the fetus and you thereby incur the blood money, because the killing of the child was as a result of a mistake connected with you.'

'Umar expressed, 'By Allah, you have advised differently from them. By Allah, I will not be reluctant to pay the blood money from the funds of my clan, the Banu-'Adi, under your supervision.

Imam Ali ('a) thus supervised the process of fining.35

Six-Months Pregnancy

A woman who had given birth to a child six months after her marriage was brought before 'Umar who decided her as adulteress and sentenced her to the punishment of adultery. However, Imam Ali ('a) said to him,

'If you present the issue to the Book of Allah, I will dispute with you. Allah the All-exalted says, 'The period of pregnancy and weaning of a child is thirty months.' He the Most High also says, 'Mothers suckling their children for two complete years for anyone who wants to carry out the full period of suckling.'

When the woman has carried out the suckling for two years and the period of pregnancy and suckling of the child is thirty months, the remaining is six months, which is a legal period of pregnancy. At the moment, she has only fulfilled their responsibility of suckling for six months and therefore cannot be killed.'

'Umar thus freed the woman and confirmed the decision concerning that.36

Advice Of Imam Ali

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have given ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab a precious advice concerning the issue of passing judgments. The advice is as follows:

If you maintain and act upon the following three pieces of instruction, you will dispense with anything else, but if you neglect acting upon them, nothing else will help you: (1) Execute the penal laws on the close (i.e. relatives and friends) and the remote (i.e. non-relatives and strangers) equally. (2) Adopt the judgment of the Book of Allah in states of satisfaction and anger. (3) Distribute allowances equally among people apart from their races, colors’ etc.(1)

Imam Ali’s Judgments In The Reign Of ‘Uthman

A Slave Woman Committing Adultery

In the reign of ‘Uthman, a slave woman who was in the process of buying her freedom committed fornication. She had already purchased three-quarters of her freedom. ‘Uthman asked Imam Ali (‘a) whether he should have her lashed according to the amount required for a free woman or the amount required for a slave.(2) He also asked Zayd ibn Thabit the same question. The latter said that she should be lashed according to the amount required for a slave.

However, Imam Ali (‘a) asked,

‘How can she be lashed according to the amount required for a slave when she has already purchased three-quarters of her freedom? Should you not whip her according to the amount required for a free woman as long as she is much more of that?’

Zayd answered, ‘If that is the case, then she ought to inherit according to the amount required for a free woman.’

Imam Ali (‘a) said,

‘Indeed, that is necessary.’

Zayd was silenced, but ‘Uthman disagreed with Imam Ali (‘a) and followed Zayd’s statement without paying attention to the proof, which had been given to him by the Imam (‘a).37

The Pregnant Wife Of An Old Man

An old man married a woman who became pregnant, but the old man claimed that he had not had intercourse with her and he thus denounced her pregnancy. The matter was unclear to ‘Uthman. He asked the woman, ‘Did the old man make you lose your virginity while you were a virgin?’

‘No,’ she replied.

‘Uthman thus ordered to administer the prescribed punishment on her.

Imam Ali (‘a), who was present, denied ‘Uthman’s decision and said,

(1) Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 7:413.

(2) According to the law of Islam, slaves must undergo half of the punishments prescribed.

‘A woman has two orifices; the orifice for the menstrual flow and the orifice for urine. Perhaps, the old man was close to her and his semen managed to flow into her menstrual orifice. Then, she became pregnant through him.’

When the old man was asked about that, he answered, ‘I used to discharge semen while kissing her, but without ever going to sufficient of making her lose her virginity.’

Imam Ali (‘a) declared,

‘The pregnancy is due to him and the child is his child. I consider that he should be punished for his wrongful denunciation.’ Amazed by the Imam’s judgment,

‘Uthman had to carry it out.38

Yahya And Safiyyah

Both Yahya and Safiyyah were captives of a war. However, Safiyyah committed adultery and, as a result, she gave birth to a child whom both Yahya and the man who had committed adultery with her claimed to have been their child. When the case was provided before ‘Uthman, he became too perplexed to pass a judgment. He therefore referred the case to Imam Ali (‘a) who said,

‘In this case, I will judge the same judgment of the Messenger of Allah (S) who has said, ‘The child is for the owner of the bed (on which his mother was impregnated), while the share of the adulteress is nothing but stoning.’’

Then, the Imam (‘a) judged that each one of them should be sentenced to fifty- time lashing.39

Imam Ali’s Judgments During His Reign

When caliphate was returned to Imam Ali (‘a), he used to assume the affairs of judgment between people directly in addition to his other responsibilities as the leader of the Muslim community. To save time, he might refer some issues of judicature to Shurayh the judge, but he ordered him not to pass any judgment before providing it to him (i.e. the Imam) so as to make sure that the judgments would not violate the laws of Islam.

Whenever an issue was provided before him, the Imam (‘a) would not pass any judgment unless he would listen to the whole claim of the two parties of litigation. Only then, he would issue a verdict according to the facts wholly inferred from their statements.40

The Imam (‘a) would also suspend passing a judgment before he would listen to the reply of the other party to the rival’s claims. He learnt such procedures from the Holy Prophet (S) who, upon assigning him to convey the contents of Surah Bara'ah to the polytheists, said to him,

People will litigate before you. When two parties of a lawsuit present themselves before you, you must not pass any judgment for the good of one party before you listen to the defense of the other party. By doing so, you will distinguish the right from the wrong. 41

Instructing Imam Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) also said to him when he assigned him as the chief judge of Yemen,

When two persons sue one another before you, you must not pass a judgment for one of them before you ask the other (and investigate the case). 42

When a piece of the testimony of a witness contradicts another piece (of the same witness), the Imam (‘a) would consider the earlier piece and reject the latter. This was also one of the instructions of the Holy Prophet (S) to him when he said,

When one testifies to a matter and then contradicts his testimony, we will consider his first testimony and reject the other. 43

When he would discover the falsity of the testimony of a witness, Imam Ali (‘a) would punish him severely; he would send him to the marketplace to expose him so that all people would recognize him as false witness, and would then detain him for several days.44

Whose Testimony Is Admitted?

In the conception of Imam Ali (‘a), the testimony of those whom had been subjected to a punishment prescribed by the religious law should be of two types. First, the testimony of those who repented from their crimes and stopped sinning after they had encountered a punishment should be accepted. In this regard, Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

The testimony of one who declared repentance after he had been exposed to a punishment is admissible. 45

Second, the testimony of those who insisted on their crimes after a penal law had been practically applied to them should be rejected. In this respect, Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said to Salamah ibn Kuhayl,

Be it known to you that Muslims are considered decent witnesses 46 *when they testify to or against each other, except those whom had been exposed to a punishment (prescribed by the religious law) but they did not repent from the crime for which they had been punished, or those whom are notoriously known as false witnesses.* 47

Retreat From Testimony

When a witness retreats from his testimony after the issuance and execution of a verdict, Imam Ali (‘a) would impose a fine on him.

It happened that two men testified against a man that he had committed larceny. Accordingly, Imam Ali (‘a) sentenced the man to the hand-cutting punishment, which is the punishment of larceny according to the Islamic code of religious law.48

However, the same two witnesses brought another man before the Imam (‘a) and claimed that they had mistaken that man with this man who was the actual larcener! Imam Ali (‘a) rejected their testimony and imposed on them the payment of the blood money of the man whose hand was cut off according to the testimonies of these witnesses.49

On another occasion, four men testified that they had seen a man committing adultery with a woman while they were looking at them. Accordingly, the man was thus stoned as a punishment for committing adultery. After that, one of the witnesses retreated from his testimony. Imam Ali ('a) thus issued this judgment:

The witness, who had retreated from his testimony, claiming that he had mistaken the man with another, must pay one quarter of the blood money (of the man against whom he had testified). If two witnesses retreated from their testimony, claiming that they had mistaken the man with another, they should pay half of the blood money as fine. If the four witnesses retreated from their testimony for the same claim, then they should be fined the entire amount of the blood money. 50

Regard For The Health Of The Punished

Another feature of Imam Ali's judgment was that he used to execute the religious punishments as soon as possible without any delay. In the Islamic code of religious law, the crime of committing adultery cannot be proven without the testimony of four witnesses under certain conditions. One day, three persons testified against a man to have committed adultery.

When the Imam ('a) asked about the fourth witness, they answered that he would soon come. However, the Imam ('a) did not grant them respite. He ordered the executors of the punishments to take these three men and execute the punishment of false testimony on them. He ('a) then declared,

In the execution of the religious punishments, there must not be any respite, be it for one hour only. 51

However, the Imam ('a) would not apply the punishments to the wounded persons; rather, he would delay that, until they would be cured. Justifying the matter, the Imam ('a) feared lest the punishment would cause death to the wounded man because of his wounds.52

Imam Ali (‘a) also admitted the testimonies of boys when they insist on their testimonies after they attain maturity.53 He is thus reported to have said that the testimonies of boys against one another are admissible before they depart or return home (i.e. as long as they are still in the scene of the crime).54

Likewise, Imam Ali (‘a) admitted the testimonies of the slaves, after they are proven decent, without citing any difference between the free and the enslaved persons in this regard.55

Testimonies Of Women

In the Islamic code of religious law, the testimony of two women is regarded as equal to the testimony of one man. However, Imam Ali (‘a) did not apply this rule to such situations like the following:

1) When a murder is committed and the witnesses are only women, the testimony of two women only is admitted (since murders are proven by the testimony of two men, which is equal to the testimony of four women in general).

2) Two women’s testimony is admissible in issues that men are not allowed to witness (i.e. feminine issues).

It is reported that a group of people led a woman before the Imam (‘a) and claimed that she had committed fornication. The Imam (‘a) ordered women to check her virginity. When they told the Imam (‘a) that she was still virgin, the Imam (‘a) declared, ‘I will never whip a woman on whom the seal of Allah is still preserved.’56

3) In situations attended by women only, their testimony should be decided as admissible. A moribund man could not find anyone except his wife to make his will. When the issue was provided before Imam Ali (‘a), he decided the admissibility of the woman’s testimony, yet in only one quarter of the legacy.57

4) Women's testimony to matrimonial contracts is admissible. Imam Ali ('a) thus admitted the testimony of a woman who had testified to the concluding of a matrimonial contract between a man and a woman.58

Multiplicity Of Confessions

Just as crimes of adultery cannot be proved unless four decent witnesses testify that they have seen the perpetration of the crime with their own eyes, so also the confession of committing adultery cannot be admitted unless it is repeated four times on different occasions.

In this respect, it is reported that a pregnant woman came to Imam Ali ('a) and said, 'Please, purify me! May Allah purify you from any sin! Chastisement in this world is very much easier than the ceaseless chastisement of the other world.'

The Imam ('a) asked,

'From what should I purify you?'

She answered, 'I have committed adultery!' The Imam ('a) asked,

'Are you married?'

'Yes, I am,' she answered.

'Was your husband present (i.e. at home) or absent (i.e. on a journey or the like) when you committed adultery?'

Asked the Imam ('a).

'He was present,'

she answered.

The Imam ('a) however ordered her to go home and keep herself there until she would give birth.

As soon as she gave birth, she hurried to the Imam (‘a) and asked him to purify her.

The Imam (‘a) repeated the same previous questions and she gave the same answers.

He (‘a) then ordered her to go home and suckle her baby for two whole years. Hence, the Imam (‘a) said,

‘O Allah, these are two testimonies.’

After the two years, the woman came to the Imam (‘a) and asked him to purify her.

Once more, the Imam (‘a) repeated the same questions and she gave the same answers.

The Imam (‘a) then ordered her to go home and tend for her child until he would be able to discern the right from the wrong and understand what he would do. The woman left, weeping.

The Imam (‘a) thus said,

‘This is the third testimony.’

On her way back after she had met Imam Ali (‘a) for the third time, the woman met ‘Amr ibn kurayth Al-Makhzumi who asked her about her story.

She said, ‘I have come to the Leader of the believers to purify me, but he ordered me to nurture my child until he would be sensible enough to eat and drink and save himself from falling from a roof and from falling in a well, for instance. I now fear lest death would come upon me before I will be purified by the Leader of the believers.’

‘Amr thus suggested that she would right now return to Imam Ali (‘a) and inform him that ‘Amr had committed himself to taking care of the child.

When she did, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

‘O Allah, they are now four testimonies.’

He thus sentenced her to the punishment of committing adultery; i.e. stoning to death.(1)

A similar story, it is reported that a man came to Imam Ali (‘a) and said, ‘I have committed adultery; so, please purify me.’

The Imam (‘a) asked,

‘What is your clan?’

The man answered, ‘I am from Muzayyanah.’

The Imam (‘a) asked,

‘Can you read any part of the Holy Quran correctly?’

‘Yes,’ the man answered.

The Imam (‘a) then ordered him to read part of the Holy Quran, and the man read excellently.

The Imam (‘a) then asked,
‘Do you experience any mental defect?’

‘No, I am not,’ answered the man.

The Imam (‘a) then ordered him to leave so that he would ask about his manners.

(1) Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 88.

The man left, but he, after a while, returned to the Imam (‘a) and asked him to purify him.

The Imam (‘a) asked,

'Do you have a wife who lives with you?'

'Yes, I do,' answered the man.

The Imam ('a) again ordered him to leave and sent some people to the quarter of the man, asking about his manners. The folks of the man approved of the soundness of his mind.

For the third time, the man returned to Imam Ali ('a) and repeated the same request, confessing that he had committed adultery.

The Imam ('a) once more ordered him to leave.

When the man returned for the fourth time and confessed of the same crime, the Imam ('a) ordered Qambar, his servant, to detain him. He then ordered him to apply the punishment of stoning to death to the man.59

Imam Ali ('a) used to stop executing the punishments prescribed by the religious law when any suspicion or confusion surrounded the case. He ('a) is reported to have said,

Ward off the executing of punishments when suspicion is aroused. 60

Executors Of Punishments

Imam Ali ('a) believed that those who participate in executing a punishment should not have committed the same crime for which the punishment would be executed.

It is reported that when a woman confessed four times of having committed adultery before Imam Ali ('a), he ordered Qambar to gather people. When they gathered before him, he delivered a speech to them, saying,

All praise and thanks be to Allah. O people, your leader (Imam) will lead this woman to the outskirts of Al-Kufah to execute the punishment on her, if Allah wills. I, the Leader of the Believers, order you all to join me

carrying your stones while you are so disguised that one of you must not recognize the other. Now, you may leave to your houses.

People thus left. The next morning, the Imam (‘a), accompanied by people who were disguised and who masked their faces and held stones in their hands and carried others in their dresses and sleeves, led the woman out of the city. He then dug a pit and ordered the woman to go down. He then said to the attending people,

Verily, Allah has ordered His Prophet and, in turn, the Prophet ordered me that one who is supposed to be punished by Allah for a crime must not participate in executing the punishment on others who have committed the same crime. Now, any one of you who deserves to be punished the same punishment that will be applied to this woman must not execute the punishment.

All of a sudden, all people left except Imam Ali and his two sons Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn who, alone, executed the punishment![61]

Judgment In Issues Of Misappropriation

Imam Ali (‘a) was sitting in the Al-Kufah Mosque when Abdullah ibn Qufl Al-Tamimi passed by him carrying an armor that had been possessed by Talhah ibn ‘Ubaydullah before he was killed in the Battle of the Camel. Upon seeing the armor, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

‘This armor is Talhah’s. It was wrongly stolen from the spoils of the war in Al-Basrah.’

However, Abdullah asked Imam Ali (‘a) to present himself before court to prove his claim, and the Imam (‘a) responded.

Before Shurayh the judge, Imam Ali (‘a) confirmed,

‘The armor was Talhah’s. It was wrongly stolen from the spoils of the war in Al-Basrah.’

Shurayh asked Imam Ali (‘a) to provide evidence proving his claim; so, the Imam (‘a) brought Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) to testify to the accuracy of his claim. However, Shurayh the judge said, ‘This is one witness only (while a claim is proved accurate by the testimony of two, not one, witnesses)! I do not pass a judgment due to the testimony of one witness only!’

Imam Ali (‘a), responding to the judge and brought Qambar who testified to the truth of his claim.

Yet, Shurayh the judge said, ‘This man is slave!’ He therefore rejected the testimony of Qambar.

This procedure enraged Imam Ali (‘a) who said to Abdullah,

‘Take the armor for yourself. This judge has passed three wrong judgments.’

Astounded by the Imam’s word, Shurayh said, ‘I will not give my final verdict before you tell me how I passed three judgments wrongfully.’

The Imam (‘a) explained,

When I told you that this armor was Talhah’s and it was stolen from the spoils of the war, you asked me to provide evidence. The Messenger of Allah (S) said, ‘Whenever there is theft in the spoils of war, no evidence is required to prove it.’ However, I said to myself that you might have not heard this Prophetic saying. This is one of your wrong judgments.

I then brought to you Al-Hasan to testify to the truth of my claim, but you rejected his testimony, claiming that the testimony of one witness is not admissible unless there would be another witness with him. The Messenger of Allah (S) accepted the testimony of one witness along with an oath. This is the second wrong judgment of you.

I then brought to you Qambar to testify to me, and he did, but you rejected his testimony, claiming that he was slave. In fact, the testimony of

a slave is acceptable provided he is proven decent. Woe to you! The leader of Muslims is entrusted with greater affairs than this one! 62

Lot

In cases of confusion and contradiction of evidence, judges depend upon lots to settle the disputes.

It is reported that two men litigated before Imam Ali ('a) about an animal that each one of them claimed that it had thrown a young one at his manger. Each one of them provided evidence proving the validity of his claim. The Imam ('a) cast lot on two parts and marked each part with a different mark. He then prayed to Almighty Allah saying,

O Allah; O Lord of the seven heavens and the seven layers of earth; O Lord of the Great Throne; O Knower of the unseen and the seen; O All-beneficent; O All-merciful, please let the true owner of the animal take it. So, I beseech You to let this lot fall on the name of the true owner.

Thus, the Imam ('a) decided the one on whose name the lot fell to be the true owner of the animal.63

Litigation Against A Deaf

Before Imam Ali ('a), a man disputed with another man who was deaf, claiming that the deaf had owed him money. However, the claimant had no evidence to provide. Judging between them, Imam Ali ('a) said,

'All praise be to Allah Who has not caused me to depart from this world before He made me elucidate to this community whatever is needed by its individuals.'

The Imam ('a) then ordered them to bring him a copy of the Holy Quran. He showed it to the deaf and asked, 'What is this?' The deaf raised his head towards the sky to indicate that that was the

Book of Allah. The Imam (‘a) then ordered the guardian of the deaf to be brought before him. When the guardian, who was the deaf person’s brother, came, the Imam (‘a) ordered Qambar to bring him a paper and an inkpot. When Qambar did, the Imam (‘a) said to the brother of the dead,

‘This is between you and me.’

The Imam (‘a) then wrote down these words:

‘By Allah save Whom there is no god and Who is the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful, the Interrogator, the Overcomer, the Able to harm, the Source of benefits, the King, and the Overtaker, Who knows the covert and the overt by Him I swear that so-and- so (i.e. he wrote the name of the claimant) has no debt that so-and-so (i.e. the defendant) owes him and has no due that he might demand from him for any reason.’

The Imam (‘a) then washed the paper and ordered the deaf person to drink the ink of these words. However, the deaf refrained from doing so. As a result, Imam Ali (‘a) judged that the deaf should pay the debt to the claimant.64

Detaining The Sinful Scholars And The Incompetent Physicians

Imam Ali (‘a) used to detain the sinful scholars and the incompetent physicians. Confirming this law, he (‘a) said,

It is obligatory upon an Imam (i.e. leader) to detain the sinful scholars and the incompetent physicians. 65

Unjust Rulers

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Imam Ali (‘a),

When the Angel of Death descends to take the soul of an unbeliever, he carries with him a skewer made of fire. He thus pulls out the unbeliever's soul with that skewer so violently that even Hellfire cries.

Imam Ali ('a) asked, 'Does this thing happen to any one of your community?'

The Holy Prophet (S) answered,

Yes, it does. It happens to the unjust rulers, those who swallow the property of the orphans wrongfully, and the false witnesses. 66

Administering Oaths On The Jews And The Christians

When a lawsuit was provided against a non-Muslim who was required to take an oath to defend himself, Imam Ali ('a) would not make him take oaths in the sacred places of Muslims such as mosques; rather, he would order him to take oath in a synagogue if he was Jew or a church if he was Christian. If the defendant was Magus, he would take an oath in his temple. In such cases, Imam Ali ('a) used to say,

'Put them under stress so that Muslims would learn lessons from them.' 67

Sentence To Imprisonment

Imam Ali ('a) used to sentence the following three categories of people to detention: (1) the usurpers, (2) those who misappropriate the financial dues of orphans, and (3) those who deny the trusts that were put with them.68

The Imam ('a) would investigate the properties of such categories of people; if he found that they had possessed property, he would confiscate their property and give them to those whose dues were

stolen by them. In some issues of debt, Imam Ali (‘a) also sentenced the debtors to imprisonment.

If he discovered that such a nonpayer was truly bankrupt or too poor to pay his debt, he would release him so that he would be able to give back the debts in such ways like working. The Imam (‘a) also sentenced the debtor who played tricks on the creditors to imprisonment. He would then distribute his property among the creditors according to the system of shares.[69]

Some Marvellous Judgments Of Imam Ali

The Mysterious Crime

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) went into the mosque and found a young man weeping while some people were surrounding him. The Imam (‘a) asked about the matter and the young man said, ‘Shurayh has judged a case against me and he has not done justice to me.’

The Imam (‘a) asked,

‘What is the nature of your affair?’

Indicating to a group of people who were present, the young man replied, ‘These people took my father out on a journey with them. They came back but he did not come back. I asked them about him and they said that he had died. I asked them about the money that he had taken with him and they denied any knowledge about the money. Then, Shurayh the judge put them under oath and they took an oath. Consequently, the judge ordered me to stop interfering with them.’

Imam Ali (‘a) immediately called his servant Qambar and ordered him to gather the people and summon the military police. Then,

he sat down and asked these persons to come before him and the young man with them. He asked him about what he had said, and the young man repeated his claim and began to cry, saying, 'By Allah, I accuse them of killing my father. They tricked him so that they could take him with them out of a desire to steal his money.'

Then, Imam Ali ('a) questioned these persons. They told him exactly what they had told Shurayh: 'The man died and we do not know about any money of his.'

Then, he looked into their faces and said,

'What do you think? Do you think that I do not know what you have done with the father of this youth? If so, I would have little knowledge.'

The Imam ('a) ordered them to separate from each other and they separated from each other within the mosque. Each one of them was made to stand next to one of the pillars in the mosque. Next, the Imam ('a) summoned

'Ubaydullah ibn Abi-Rafi', his scribe at that time, and ordered him to sit down. Then, he called one of them and said,

'Tell me on which day you left your houses while the father of this boy was with you. As you answer, try to use the lowest tone of your voice.'

The man answered and the Imam ('a) asked 'Ubaydullah to write his answer down. The Imam ('a) then asked him a number of questions about the month, the year, the sickness that killed the young man's father, the person who washed the dead body, the person who shrouded it, the person who performed the ritual Prayer of the Deceased, and such similar questions the answers of all of which were written down by 'Ubaydullah by the command of Imam Ali('a).

Immediately, Imam Ali ('a) raised his voice with the statement of Allahu- Akbar in such a tone that all people in the mosque could hear him. Then, he ordered the man to be taken back to his place.

The Imam (‘a) then summoned another man of the group and made him sit close to him. He questioned him in the same way as he had questioned the first man, but he gave answers, which disagreed with the answers of the first man throughout his interrogation.

All the time, ‘Ubaydullah was writing the answers down. When he had finished his questioning, he again raised his voice with the statement of allahu-akbar in such a tone that all people in the mosque could hear him.

The Imam (‘a) then ordered the two men to be taken out of the mosque to the prison, but they were made to stand and wait at the door.

He summoned the third man and questioned him in the same way as he had questioned the first. The man gave answers that contradicted what both of the two previously interrogated men had said. However, the answers of this man were confirmed. The Imam (‘a) repeated raising his sound with the same statement and ordered the third man to be taken out to his two friends.

He then summoned the fourth man whose words were confused and who stuttered. Imam Ali (‘a) warned him. Therefore, the man confessed that his friends had killed the man and taken his money and that they had buried him in a place near Al-Kufah.

Imam Ali (‘a) then raised his voice with the statement of Allahu-Akbar and ordered the man to be taken to prison.

He then summoned one of the previously interrogated men and said to him,

‘You have claimed that the man died in bed. Yet, you killed him. Tell me the truth about your situation; otherwise, I will punish you as a warning to the others that I should be told the truth in your case.’

The man confessed of killing the young man's father in the same way the previous man had mentioned.

Then, the Imam ('a) summoned the rest of them and they all confessed the murder. They were at a loss to do anything. Their statements about the man's murder and the theft of his money concurred.

He ordered some of his men to go with some of them to the place where they had buried the money and to get it out and hand it over to the young man, the son of the murdered man.

Who Is The Master And Who Is The Slave?

One of the mountaineers went on pilgrimage to the Sacred House of Allah along with his slave. However, the slave made some mistakes that made his master punish him. The slave angrily said, 'You are not my master; rather, I am your master and you are only a slave of mine!' They thus quarreled and threatened each other. When they reached Al-Kufah, they provided their case before Imam Ali ('a) to judge between them.

The master said, 'O Leader of the Believers, this man is my slave. I disciplined him when he made mistakes, but he, all of a sudden, revolted against me and claimed that he was my master.'

The slave then spoke, 'By Allah, this man is one of my slaves. My father sent me with him so that he would guide me. Nevertheless, he revolted against me, claiming that I am his slave, so that he would seize my money.' Each one of them took oaths and gave the lie to the other. Imam Ali ('a) postponed their case to the next day.

The next day, Imam Ali ('a) ordered Qambar to make two holes in a wall. When the two men presented themselves before the Imam ('a), he requestioned them and they both insisted on their previous claims.

The Imam (‘a) ordered them both to put their heads in the two holes. When they did, Imam Ali (‘a) ordered Qambar to fetch him the sword of Allah’s Messenger (S). When Qambar did, the Imam (‘a) shouted at him,

‘Hurry to behead the slave!’

Immediately, one of them pulled his head out of the hole while the other kept his head there! The Imam (‘a) then said to the slave, ‘You have claimed that you are not that man’s slave!’ The slave confessed that because the man hit him severely, he, out of rage, claimed that he was not his slave. The Imam (‘a) thus delivered the slave to his master.70

The Eight Loaves Of Bread

Two men traveled together on a journey. They sat eating together. One of them took out five loaves of bread and the other three. A man passed by them and greeted them. They invited him to eat and he responded. When he had finished eating, he put down eight dirhams saying, ‘This is compensation for your food which I have eaten.’ The two men began to dispute over it. The owner of the three loaves said, ‘This should be shared between us half each.’

However, the owner of the five loaves answered, ‘Rather, I should have five dirhams and you should have three.’

They came before Imam Ali (‘a) seeking for a fair judgment between them. When they told their story, the Imam (‘a) first urged them to forsake rivalry and reach an agreement peacefully. He thus said, ‘

This is a matter in which meanness and rivalry are not proper. Reconciliation would be better.’

However, the owner of the three loaves refused and insisted on judgment. The Imam (‘a) thus said,

'Since you will only be satisfied by the giving of judgment, your share must be only one of the eight dirhams while your companion must have seven.'

Both of them were astounded by this judgment; so, they asked for clarification.

The Imam ('a) thus said,

'You had three loaves only while your companion had five. If multiplied by three (because the eight loaves were eaten by three persons equally), the loaves will be twenty-four pieces. So, you ate eight, your companion eight, and your guest eight.

Thus, he gave you eight dirhams, which means that he gave you one dirham for each loaf of bread. Hence, seven of these dirhams belong to your companion (as he supplied seven- eighths of the guest's food) and one to you (as you supplied one-eighth of the guest's food).'

The two men departed, reflecting on the perspicacity of the judgement of their case.71

Whose Is The Male And Whose Is The Female?

Two women were brought before Imam Ali ('a) to decide their quarrel over a male and female infant, each claiming that the male child belonged to her. Imam Ali ('a) heard both the women in detail. On their persistence on their respective stands, he ('a) asked two bottles of identical weight to be brought to him.

He asked the two women to fill the bottles with milk from their breasts. He then asked the bottles to be weighed. One bottle weighed more than the other did. Imam Ali ('a) said,

'Indeed, the woman whose milk is heavier than that of the other woman is the mother of the male child and the woman whose milk is lighter in weight is the mother of the female.' 72

The Four Drunken Persons

Four men drank intoxicants and then started stabbing each other with knives. Each one of them was wounded. An account of their action was brought to Imam Ali (‘a) who ordered them to be put in prison until they became sober. Two of them however died in the prison but two survived. The families of the two dead men came to the Imam (‘a) and demanded to retaliate against these two men, claiming that the two surviving men had killed their relatives.

Imam Ali (‘a) asked,

‘How can you be sure of that? Perhaps the dead men killed each other.’

They answered, ‘In fact, we do not know. So, judge between them according to what Allah has taught you.’

The Imam (‘a) said,

‘The blood money of the two men who were killed must be paid by the tribes of the four men after the account has been settled by the payment for the two who are alive of the blood money for their wounds.’ 73

The Drowned

Six men went down to the River Euphrates and dived into it to play. One of them drowned. Two of them testified that the other three men had made him drown, while the three testified that the two made him drown.

Imam Ali (‘a) adjudged the division of the blood money into fifths on the five. The two were to pay three-fifths according to the amount of testimony against them, and the three were to pay two-fifths in accordance with the amount of testimony against them.74

The Two-Head Newborn

A woman gave birth on the bed of her husband to a child who had two heads and two bodies attached to one waist. The husband's family members were confused as to whether it was one or two persons. They went to Imam Ali ('a) to ask him about the issue so that they might know the law with regard to him. The Imam ('a) said,

'Watch him when he goes to sleep. Then, wake up one of the bodies and heads. If they both wake up at the same time, then they are a single human being. If one of them wakes up and the other remains asleep, they are two persons and their rights in inheritance are the rights of two persons.' 75

The Lost Money

Two persons had entrusted three dinars with a man; two dinars were owned by one of them and one dinar by the other. However, the entrusted man lost one dinar. When they brought the case before Imam Ali ('a), he adjudged that the owner of the two dinars should be given one and a half dinar as compensation and the owner of the one dinar should be given half a dinar only.76

Pardoning A Larcener

A man came to Imam Ali ('a) and confessed that he had committed larceny, asking the Imam to execute the punishment on him. However, the Imam ('a) asked him,

'Can you read a part of the Holy Quran?'

The man replied in the affirmative and said that he memorized Surah Al- Baqarah. The Imam ('a) said,

'Thus, I exempt your hand from being cut off for the sake of Surah Al-Baqarah.'

This judgment enraged Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays, the hypocrite, who thus asked the Imam ('a) astonishingly, 'How come you cancel off the execution of one of the punishments ordered by Almighty Allah?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

'What is the scope of your knowledge about such matters? When evidence is proven admissible, the leader (i.e. the religious authority) has no right to pardon; but if one confesses of committing a crime, then the leader has the option to execute the punishment or to pardon.' 77

The Punishment Of The Highway Robbers

Imam Ali ('a) adjudged that highway robbers should be sentenced to death, their property should be confiscated, and they should be crucified.78

However, as for highwaymen who neither kill people nor rob their properties, but they only spread horror among the passersby, Imam Ali ('a) adjudged that they should be banished to another town up to their death. He ('a) declared that such highwaymen are intended in the following holy Quranic verse:

The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only that they should be murdered, or crucified, or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides, or they should be expelled out of the land. This shall be as a disgrace for them in this world; and in the hereafter, they shall have a grievous chastisement. (5:33)

The Hitting And The Hit Ships

In a case of two ships one of which hit the other and both of which incurred damage, Imam Ali ('a) ruled that the hitting ship should guarantee the damage of the hit ship, which should not undergo any fine.79

A Share Of A Legacy

When a man had willed that a share of his legacy should be given as alms, his heirs disagreed about the amount that they should give as alms. When they provided the case before Imam Ali (‘a), he decided that one eighth of the legacy should be given as alms.

Demonstrating evidence, Imam Ali (‘a) recited this holy Quranic verse:

Alms are only for (1) the poor, (2) the needy, (3) the officials appointed over them, (4) those whose hearts are made to incline to truth, (5) the ransoming of captives, (6) those in debts, (7) in the way of Allah, and (8) the wayfarer; an ordinance from Allah; and Allah is knowing, Wise. (9:60)

Commenting, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

‘The beneficiaries of alms are thus eight categories; the share of each category is one-eighth.’ 80

Similar to this case, it is reported that a man was about to die when he bequeathed part of his wealth without designating it. His heirs differed on that after his death. They came to Imam Ali (‘a) and presented their difference. He (‘a) instructed them to exclude one-seventh of the wealth as the bequest. He (‘a) then recited this holy Quranic verse:

It has seven gates; for every gate, there shall be a separate party of them. (15:44) 81

The Old Saves

Before his death, a man willed his heirs to manumit all of his old slaves. However, the heirs could not find a way to distinguish the old slaves from the new ones. When they asked Imam Ali (‘a), he instructed,

'You may manumit the slaves whom have been owned by him (i.e. the testator) for six months.'

The Imam ('a) then recited this holy Quranic verse:

And as for the moon, We have ordained for it stages until it becomes again as an old dry palm branch. (36:39)

Scientifically, it has been established that the branch of a date-palm tree becomes similar to the moon in its strength exactly six months after fruit is taken from it.82

Fasting For A Season

About the case of one who had vowed to observe fasting for a hin (i.e. season), but he could not identify the exact period, Imam Ali ('a) instructed,

'You may observe fasting for six months.'

The Imam ('a) then recited the following holy Quranic verse:

Yielding its fruit in every season (hin) by the permission of its Lord. (14:25)

The Imam ('a) then commented, 'A tree usually yields its fruit every six months.'83

A Married Woman Asking For A Husband

A woman came to Imam Ali ('a) and asked, 'What do you judge about a woman who, after obtaining her father's permission, asks for a husband although she is married and having a husband? Is this legal?'

The Imam ('a) ordered her to bring her husband before him. When the Imam ('a) talked to the husband, the latter confessed that he was impotent (i.e. unable to have sexual intercourse or to

reach orgasm). So, the Imam (‘a) ordered him to divorce his wife and he then gave her in marriage to another man.84

Accidental Homicide

About the case of a man who was accidentally killed after he had bequeathed the third of his legacy to a certain body, Imam Ali (‘a) adjudged that one-third of the blood money to be paid as expiation, because the accidental homicide should be within the bequest.85

A Dog Or A Sheep

A Bedouin asked Imam Ali (‘a), ‘I saw a dog copulating with a ewe, and it gave birth to an animal. Is it legal or illegal to eat the meat of that animal?’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

‘Look how it eats: if it eats meat, then it is dog; but if it eats grass, then it is sheep.’

The Bedouin said, ‘I saw it eating meat once and grass at another time.’

The Imam (‘a) said,

‘Look how it drinks: if it sips, then it is sheep; but if it licks, then it is dog.’

The Bedouin said, ‘I saw it sipping once and licking at another time.’

The Imam (‘a) said,

‘Look how it walks with the herd; if it is in the rear, then it is dog; but if it is in the middle or the front of the herd, then it is sheep.’

The Bedouin said, 'I saw it in the rear once and in the middle at another time.'

The Imam ('a) said,

'Look how it sits: if it kneels down, then it is sheep; but if it squats, then it is dog.'

The Bedouin said, 'It sometimes kneels down and other times squats.'

Finally, Imam Ali ('a) said,

'You may then slaughter it; if it has rumen, then it is sheep; but if it has intestine, then it is dog!' 86

A Magus Lady Converting To Islam

A magus lady who had converted to Islam before her husband consummated their marriage was brought before Imam Ali ('a) to judge between her husband and her. The Imam ('a) summoned her husband and asked him to convert to Islam, but he refused. Hence, the Imam ('a) decided their matrimonial contract as invalid87 and adjudged that the husband should pay the wife half of the dowry. He then commented, 'Islam has increased this woman nothing but more dignity.'88

Right Of Divorcement

About the case of a woman who, in her matrimonial contract, specified as condition that she would have the right to divorce and the right of engagement in sexual intercourse with her husband, Imam Ali ('a) adjudged that the right of divorcement and the right of engagement in sexual intercourse should be the husband's only.

Hence, the woman's condition was in violation of the Prophetic practice that entails that husbands are responsible for covering the expenses of their wives, have the right to have sexual intercourse with their wives, and have the right to divorce them.89

Homicide, Larceny, And Drinking Wine At The Same Time

A man who had committed the crimes of homicide, larceny, and drinking intoxicants altogether was brought before Imam Ali ('a) who adjudged that the man should be lashed eighty times (for violating the prohibition of drinking wine), had his hand cut off (for committing larceny), and sentenced to death penalty (for murdering a human being).90

Fraud

In the case of two merchants each of whom sells his stock to the other and they both flee from one country to another, Imam Ali ('a) sentenced them to the hand-cutting punishment, because he considered them to have stolen people and stolen each other.91

Rejecting The Testimonies Of The Jews

Before Imam Ali ('a), two Jews testified against a man to have converted to Islam. However, the Imam ('a) rejected their testimonies and justified that the Jews deem lawful distorting the words of Almighty Allah and witnessing falsely.92

Admitting The Testimonies Of The Christians

Imam Ali ('a) admitted the testimonies of the Christians in the cases of conversion to Islam as well as other cases. He thus recited this holy Quranic verse as evidence:

Certainly you will find the most violent of people in enmity for those who believe to be the Jews and those who are polytheists, and you will certainly find the nearest in friendship to those who believe to be those who say, 'We are Christians.' This is because there are priests and monks among them and because they do not behave proudly. (5:82)

Commenting on the meaning of this holy verse, Imam Ali ('a) added,

He who does not behave proudly against serving Almighty Allah will not testify falsely. 93

Retaliation Between Fathers And Sons

Imam Ali ('a) adjudged that no retaliation should be made on fathers who kill their sons, but in cases that sons kill their fathers, they should be subjected to the law of retaliation.94

False Accusation Of A Group Of People

Imam Ali ('a) adjudged that a person who accuses a group of people falsely should be subjected to one-time punishment.

Commenting on this judgment, Shaykh Al-tusi, a master scholar in Shi'ite Muslim jurisprudence, states, 'If one person accuses a group of people falsely in one utterance, he should be then subjected to one-time punishment of false accusation. However, if the same person accuses a group of people separately on more than one occasion, then he should be subjected to the punishment of false accusation as many times as he said the utterance of false accusation.

Fabricated Stories

Unfortunately, some books of history have mentioned stories about the judgments of Imam Ali (‘a), but their stories lacked accuracy, because they either violate good reason or violate the laws of Islam in general.

Examples of such false stories are the case of the man who was found murdered in a site of ruins,95 the case of the husband who copulated with his menstrual wife and impregnated her,96 the case of the man who bequeathed one thousand dinars of his legacy to be paid as alms,97 the case of the six-month-old baby to whom the Imam (‘a) spoke in a strange language,98 the case of the share of inheritance of a widow along with her two daughters and parents-in-law,99 the case of the six-hundred dinars,100 the case of the husband who had not copulated with his wife and yet she gave birth to a child,101 the case of deciding anal copulation with the wife as sodomy,102 the case of the illegal oath,103 and many other false stories that contradict the principles of Muslim jurisprudence.

All such stories have been fabricated against Imam Ali (‘a) within so many other fables that can unfortunately be seen in many books of history of Islam.

Knowledge And Learning In The View Of Imam ‘Ali

During his caliphate, one of Imam Ali’s most important political programs was to spread knowledge, eradicate illiteracy, and make it accessible for all people to learn the various sciences and fields of erudition. To achieve this goal, the Imam (‘a) used the Al-Kufah Mosque as faculty of learning.

He used to deliver scientific lectures and give lessons in such fields like wisdom, intellectual concepts, monotheism, theology, and spirituality in the light of decisive and scientific proofs that were beyond dispute and suspicion, not to mention his valuable sermons that penetrated into the most profound parts of mentality.

From this school, many great personalities graduated, such as ‘Ammar ibn Yasir, kujr ibn ‘Adi, Kumayl ibn Ziyad, Abu’l-Aswad Al-Du'ali, and Maytham Al-Tammar.

Let us now listen to some words of Imam Ali (‘a) concerning knowledge and the honorable ranks the knowledgeable:

Praise Of Knowledge

In his discourse with Kumayl ibn Ziyad, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

O Kumayl, these hearts are containers. The best of them is that which preserves its contents. So, preserve what I say to you. People are of three types: One is the scholar and divine, then the seeker of knowledge who is also on the way to deliverance, and lastly the common rot who run after every caller and bend in the direction of every wind.

They seek no light from the effulgence of knowledge so as to be guided and they do not take protection of any reliable support so that they will be saved.

O Kumayl, knowledge is better than wealth. Knowledge guards you, while you have to guard the wealth. Wealth decreases by spending, while knowledge multiplies by spending. Knowledge is the ruler while wealth is ruled.

O Kumayl, adoration to the knowledgeable is belief, which is acted upon. With it, man acquires obedience during his life and a good name after his death. The benefit of wealth vanishes when wealth vanishes. Those who amass wealth are dead even though they may be living while those endowed with knowledge will remain as long as the world lives.

Their bodies are not available but their figures exist in the hearts. Look, here is a heap of knowledge. I wish I could get someone to bear it [104] *. Yes, I did find such a one; but either he was one who could not be relied upon.*

He would exploit the religion for worldly gains, and by virtue of Allah’s favors on him, he would domineer over the people and through Allah’s

pleas, he would lord over His devotees. Or he was one who was obedient to the hearers of truth but there was no intelligence in his bosom. At the first appearance of doubt, he would entertain misgivings in his heart.

So, neither this nor that was good enough. Either the man is eager for pleasures, easily led away by passions, or is covetous for collecting and hoarding wealth. Neither of them has any regard for religion or wisdom and conviction in any matter. The nearest example of these is the loose cattle. This is the way that knowledge dies away with the death of its bearers.

However, the earth is never devoid of those who maintain Allah's plea either openly and reputedly, or being afraid. As hidden in order that Allah's pleas, proofs, and relaters of His Book should not be rebutted. Where are they?

By Allah, they are few in number, but they are great in esteem before Allah. Through them, Allah guards His pleas and proofs until they entrust them to others like themselves and sow the seeds thereof in the hearts of those who are similar to them.

Knowledge has led them to true understanding and so they have associated themselves with the spirit of conviction. They take easy what the easygoing regard as hard. They endear what the ignorant take as strange. They live in this world with their bodies here but their spirits resting in the high above.

O Kumayl, they are the trustees of Allah on His creatures, the vicegerents of Allah on His earth, His lamps in His countries, and the callers to His religion. Oh, oh, how I yearn to see them! I seek Allah's forgiveness for you and me. 105

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Knowledge is one of the two lives. 106

He ('a) is also reported as saying,

Knowledge is a masterpiece in sessions, a companion in journeys, and a source of entertainment in loneliness.[107]

About the significance of knowledge, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

When a scholar passes away, a notch is made in Islam that cannot be mended up by anything up to the Resurrection Day. [108]

Recommending of conferring honor upon the knowledgeable people, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Within your duties towards the scholars, you must not put loads of questions to them, you must not precede them in answering, you must not insist on them when they avoid (answering a question), you must not grasp their dresses when they show lethargy, you must not point to them by extending a finger (at them), you must not wink at them, you must not talk confidentially to them in their sessions, you must not inspect their flaws, you must not address them by stating the other opinions that are contradictory to theirs, you must not unveil their secrets, you must not backbite anybody in their presence, you must defend them in their presence and when they are absent alike, you must salute everyone generally and greet them exclusively and sit before them and precede all others to do what they need to do, and you must not become weary of long companionship with them.

Verily, scholars are just like date-palm trees; therefore, you must be patient while waiting for the benefits of them to fall on you. A scholar occupies the same standing of one who permanently fasts, performs acts of worship, and strives for the sake of Almighty Allah. Verily, a knowledge-seeker, when passing away, is escorted by seventy thousand angels from the favorable inhabitants of the heavens. [109]

Imam Ali (‘a) is also reported to have said,

Knowledge is too much to be numerated; therefore, choose for the best of every field (of knowledge). [110]

Encouraging people on learning, Imam Ali (‘a), once, declared from the minbar of Al-Kufah Mosque,

Is there any one to purchase knowledge with one dirham?

Responding to the Imam (‘a), Al-harith Al-A’war bought some papers and brought them to the Imam (‘a), who wrote down in them much knowledge.111

In many of his discourses, Imam Ali (‘a) laid much stress on acting upon knowledge. He once said,

Knowledge is contingent upon acting upon it. Hence, he who learns knowledge must act upon it. Knowledge is always calling upon acting; if acting does not respond, then knowledge will leave (i.e. Allah will divest one who does not act upon his knowledge of knowledgeability). 112

On another occasion, the Imam (‘a) said,

He who acts without knowledge is like one who treads without a path. Then, his deviation from the path keeps him at a distance from his aim. He who acts according to knowledge is like one who treads the clear path. Therefore, he who can see may see whether he should proceed or return. 113

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

The lowliest knowledge is that which is suspended on the tongue, while the loftiest knowledge is that which reflects on the organs and the limbs. 114

He (‘a) is also reported to have said,

Many bearers of knowledge are killed by their ignorance while the knowledge they bear does not save them (because they do not put it into practice). 115

About the categories of knowledge-seekers, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Those who seek knowledge can be classified into three groups. You can distinguish them from each other by their characteristics and signs. There are those who seek knowledge due to their haughtiness and ignorance. There are those who seek knowledge so that they may rebel and deceive others. There are also those who seek knowledge to learn and become intelligent.

Those who seek knowledge due to their haughtiness and ignorance disturb the people with their acts when they are in a group. They have a God- fearing outer look, while they are void of any piety. May Allah break their backs and cut off their noses!

Those who seek knowledge in order to rebel and deceive others always rush ahead of their colleagues and make a lot of noise. They bow down to those who are lower than they are but are wealthy. They always feed on them and sell their religion. May Allah make them blind and uproot them!

Those who seek knowledge to learn and become intelligent do not look so well and they are sad. They wake up during the darkness of the night to pray. They will bend down while wearing their nightwear. They act with fear and avoid everyone except their brethren to whom they are accustomed. May Allah strengthen them and save them on the Resurrection day. 116

Referring to the same meaning, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Had the bearers of knowledge carried knowledge properly, Allah and the angels as well as all people of obedience to Him would have cherished them. Unfortunately, they carried knowledge for seeking worldly pleasures; therefore, Allah abominated them and people disgraced them. 117

Encouraging on spread of knowledge among all people, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Allah had no commitment from and covenant with ignorant people to seek knowledge, before He had a commitment from and covenant with

scholars to give knowledge as charity to the ignorant ones. Knowledge existed before ignorance. 118

Within his teachings to his officials, Imam Ali (‘a) instructed them to use nice handwriting. He thus said,

Nice handwriting increases the clarity of the truth. 119

It is worth mentioning that the letters in the copies of the Holy Quran had not been dotted until Imam Ali (‘a) instructed and taught Abu’l-Aswad Al-Du'ali how to use dots on letters.120

New Fields Of Knowledge

Imam Ali (‘a) founded about thirty fields of knowledge that had not been known by the Arabs and the other peoples before him. Dividing science into four major divisions, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

*Sciences are classified into four classes: (1) jurisprudence, which is the science of religions, (2) medicine, which is the science of bodies, (3) grammar, which is the science of speech, and (4) astronomy, which is the science that acquaints with times.*121

Arabic Grammar

Grammar is defined as the rules of a language governing the sounds, words, sentences, and other elements, as well as their combination and interpretation. It can be also defined as the branch of language study or linguistics, which deals with the means of showing the relationship between words in use.

Undoubtedly, Imam Ali (‘a) founded the Arabic Grammar (‘ilm Al-nahw) and established its basic rules.

It is reported that when Imam Ali (‘a) taught Abu’l-Aswad Al-Du'ali the principles and rules of the Arabic Grammar, he said to him, ‘How excellent this way (nahw) is!’ Accordingly, the Arabic Grammar is known as nahw. Historicists have mentioned many reasons for the founding of the Arabic Grammar by Imam Ali (‘a).

One narration reads that a Bedouin came to Imam Ali (‘a) and asked, ‘How should we read this holy verse: ‘*la ya'kuluhu illa Al-khatun (None eats it but the steppers).’ All of us step!*’ Imam Ali (‘a) smiled and said, *‘No, you have read it erroneously. The verse reads, ‘’la ya'kuluhu illa Al-khati'un (None eats it but the wrongdoers).’’*[122]

The Bedouin said, ‘You are true, by Allah. Allah will never wrong His servants.’

Consequently, Imam Ali (‘a) said to Abu’l-Aswad Al-Du'ali,

‘The non-Arabs have embraced the religion (of Islam). You may add something to the writing of the Quran through which they can read the Quran properly and habituate their tongues to it.’

The Imam (‘a) then drew the diacritical marks, defining a mark to be for the indicative mood (raf’), another for the accusative and subjunctive moods (nasb), and one for the genitive mood (jarr or khafs).[123]

The Imam (‘a) handed over to Abu’l-Aswad Al-Du'ali a paper in which the following words were written:

Speech is entirely composed of three things: (1) noun, (2) verb, and (3) particle. Noun is the word used to designate the nominated things. Verb is a word used to designate what is to be designated, and particle is a word that refers to a certain meaning. As for nouns, they are of three types: explicit, implicit, and neither explicit nor implicit’etc.

Muslim Jurisprudence

Imam Ali (‘a) was the founder of Muslim Jurisprudence (fiqh: the science of ascertaining the precise terms of the Islamic law) along with its terms and methods.

In this connection, Ibn Abi’l-Hadid states, ‘(Imam) Ali (‘a) is the originator and founder of ‘ilm Al-fiqh and all Muslim jurisprudents depended upon and derived their jurisprudential opinions and secondary issues from him. As for the students of Abu Hani-

fah, such as Abu-Yusuf, Muhammad, and others, all of them derived their knowledge from Abu Hanifah.

Al-Shafi'i studed under Muhammad ibn Al-Hasan, which means that he derived his jurisprudential opinions from Abu Hanifah who studied under Ja'far ibn Muhammad (Al- Sadiq). Ja'far studied under his father, and the chain of his teachers, when taken upwards, ended with (Imam) Ali. Malik ibn Anas studied under Rabi'ah Al-Ra'y who studied under 'Ikrimah the student of Abdullah ibn 'Abbas. Finally, Abdullah derived his knowledge in the field of jurisprudence from (Imam) Ali. If you claim that Al-Shafi'i studied under Malik, you will conclude the same result.

As for the Shi'ite jurisprudence, it is obvious that the Shi'ah received their knowledge from (Imam) Ali.

Moreover, among the Companions who were versed in the field of jurisprudence are 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab and Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, both of whom derived their knowledge from (Imam) Ali. To prove that Abdullah ibn 'Abbas received his knowledge in the field of jurisprudence from (Imam) Ali is too clear to require evidence.

As for 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, he very frequently referred the jurisprudential questions that neither he nor were the other Companions clever enough to solve to (Imam) Ali. In this field, 'Umar declared more than once that he would certainly have faced perdition if Ali had not been there to save him. On another occasion, 'Umar declared, 'No one is allowed to issue any verdict in the mosque as long as Ali will be there.'

Despite their sects and variety of jurisprudential schools, all Muslims have reported the Holy Prophet (S) as declaring (Imam) Ali ('a) to be the best judge and the most versed in the field of issuing verdicts. The same all Muslims have also reported that the Holy Prophet (S), when he sent Ali as the chief judge of Yemen, prayed to Almighty Allah, saying,

'O Allah, please guide his heart and make his tongue firm (on the truth).'

Commenting on this prayer, (Imam) Ali ('a) said,

'Since ever then, I have not suspected in any issue of judgment between two persons.'' etc.' 124

Quranic Exegesis

Tafsir (the science of explanation of the Holy Quran, or the science of Quranic commentary) is one of the sciences that were derived from Imam Ali ('a) either directly or indirectly through Abdullah ibn 'Abbas who learnt this science from Imam Ali ('a). Abdullah was once asked, 'What is the ratio of your knowledge to that of your cousin Ali?' He answered, 'It is the same ratio of a drop of water to an ocean.'125

The book that is known as Mushaf, Ali must be full of the reasons for the revelations of the Quranic verses, the meanings of the Quranic words and expressions, and the explication of the Quranic laws.

Astronomy And Arithmetic

Astronomy ('ilm Al-falak: The science of celestial objects, including the earth in relation to them, of space, and of the universe as a whole) and Arithmetic ('ilm Al-hisab: The science of numbers; the properties and manipulation of numbers) are within the sciences the basics of which were taken from Imam Ali ('a) who, about the creation of the heavens, says,

Then He (Almighty Allah) decorated them (the heavens) with stars and the light of meteors and hung in it the shining sun and effulgent moon under the revolving sky, moving ceiling, and rotating firmament. 126

He ('a) further says,

He (Almighty Allah) called it (the sky) when it was yet in the form of vapor. At once, the links of its joints joined up. Then, Allah opened up its

closed door. 127

Some modern scholars of cosmology believe that the evolution of the universe was the result of a big bang. According to the big-bang theory, the universe cooled enough to allow the formation of certain nuclei. The theory predicts that definite amounts of hydrogen, helium, and lithium were produced.

Their abundances agree with what is observed today. About one million years later, the universe was sufficiently cool for atoms to form. The radiation that also filled the universe was then free to travel through space.128 Because of the big bang, atoms started accumulating in certain sites, forming celestial bodies that changed into light-giving matters due to chemical reactions.

In the previous quotation, Imam Ali ('a) likened the stars of the galaxy to rings that are linked to each other by the connection of gravity and the reciprocal influence on each other. After the creation of the blazing and revolving starts, they started casting lava-like substances that formed such planets like Earth. Expressing this procession, Imam Ali ('a) describes it as opening up its closed doors.

Imam Ali ('a) continues:

And (Allah) put the sentinels of meteors at its holes, and held them with His hands (i.e. power) from falling into the vastness of air. He commanded it to remain stationary in obedience to His commands.

This is a reference to the recently proven fact that meteoroids feed some of parts of the planets with particles to fill up the perforated parts, according to the process of closing up the opened parts.

Imam Ali ('a) continues:

He made its sun the bright indication for its day and its moon the gloomy indication for its night. He then put them in motion in their orbits and ordained their pace of movement in the stages of their paths in

order to distinguish with their help between night and day, and in order that the reckoning of years and calculations may be known by their fixed movements.

Diameter Of The Sun

In the field of arithmetic, it is reported that Imam Ali (‘a), when asked about the diameter of the sun, said,

‘Diameter of the sun is to multiply 900 miles with 900; that is 810,000 miles.’

In the early era of Islam, a mile was equal to 4000 arms calculated from the elbow to the fingertips. If we measure the distance between the elbow and the fingertips of an ordinary man by inches and then convert 4000 arms to inches, then to yards, and then to miles, we will discover that the 810,000 miles according to the measure in the early era of Islam is equivalent to the 865,380 English miles in its capacity as a unit of distance equal to 1.906 km.

The Seventeen Camels

Three persons who owned seventeen camels in a common manner came to Imam Ali (‘a) and stated that half of these camels should be given to one of them, one third of them to the other, and one-ninth to the third. Imam Ali (‘a) added one camel that belonged to him to the seventeen camels, and they became eighteen. He gave one of them half of the camels (that is 9), gave the other one-third (that is 6), gave the third person one-ninth (that is 2), and took back the camel he had added.

Zoology

Imam Ali (‘a) entered upon zoology (‘ilm Al-haywan: The science of the structure, physiology, behavior, classification, and distribution of animals).

Describing the common features of birds, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Allah has provided wonderful creations including the living, the lifeless, the stationary, and the moving. He has established such clear proofs for His delicate creative power and great might that minds bend down to Him in acknowledgement thereof and in submission to Him, and arguments about His Oneness strike our ears. He has created birds of various shapes, which live in the burrows of the earth, in the openings of high passes, and on the peaks of mountains.

They have different kinds of wings and various characteristics. They are controlled by the rein of Allah's authority. They flutter with their wings in the expanse of the vast firmament and the open atmosphere. He brought them into existence from nonexistence in strange external shapes, and composed them with joints and bones covered with flesh.

He prevented some of them from flying easily in the sky because of their heavy bodies and allowed them to use their wings only close to the ground. He has set them in different colors by his delicate might and exquisite creative power.

Among them are those which are tinted with one hue and there is no other hue except the one in which they have been dyed. There are others tinted with one color and having a neck ring of a different color than that with which they are tinted.

The Peacock

About the creation of the peacock, Imam Ali ('a) says,

The most amazing among them in its creation is the peacock, which Allah has created in the most symmetrical dimensions, and arranged its hues in the best arrangement with wings whose ends are interleaved together and whose tail is long.

When it moves to its female, it spreads out its folded tail and raises it up so as to cast a shade over its head, as if it were the sail of a boat being pulled by the sailor. It feels proud of its colors and swaggers with its movements. It copulates like the cocks. It leaps on the female for fecundation like lustful energetic men at the time of fighting.

I am telling you all this from observation, unlike he who narrates on the basis of weak authority, as for example, the belief of some people that it (peacock) fecundates the female by a tear which flows from its eyes and when it stops on the edges of the eyelids the female swallows it and lays its eggs thereby and not through fecundation by a male other than by means of this flowing tear.

Even if they say this, it would be no amazing than what they say about the mutual feeding of the crows for fecundation. You would imagine its feathers to be sticks made of silvers and the wonderful circles and sun-shaped feathers growing thereon to be of pure gold and pieces of green emerald.

If you likened them to anything growing on land, you would say that it is a bouquet of flowers collected during every spring. If you likened them to cloths, they would be like printed apparels or amazing variegated cloths of Yemen. If you likened them to ornaments then they would be like gems of different colors with studded silver.

The peacock walks with vanity and pride, and throws open its tail and wings, and laughs admiring the handsomeness of its dress and the hues of its necklace of gems. But when it casts its glance at its legs, it cries loudly with a voice which indicates its call for help and displays its true grief, because its legs are thin like the legs of Indo-Persian cross-bred cocks.

At the end of its shin, there is a thin thorn and on the crown of its head there is a bunch of green variegated feathers. Its neck begins in the shape of a goblet and its stretch up to its belly is like the hair-dye of Yemen in color or like silk cloth put on a polished mirror which looks as if it has been covered with a black veil, except that on account of its excessive luster and extreme brightness it appears that a lush green color has been mixed with it. Along the openings of its ears, there is a line of shining bright daisy color like the thin end of a pen. Whiteness shines on the black background.

There is hardly a hue from which it has not taken a bit, and improved it further by regular polish, luster, silken brightness, and brilliance. It is

therefore like scattered blossoms which have not been seasoned by the rains of spring or the sun of the summer.

It also sheds its plumage and puts off its dress. They all fall away and grow again. They fall way from the feather stems like the falling of leaves from twigs, and then they begin to join and grow until they return to the state that existed before their falling away.

The new hues do not change from the previous ones, nor does any color occur in other than its own place. If you carefully look at one hair from the hairs of its feather stems it would look like red rose, then emerald green, and then golden yellow.

How can sharpness of intellect describe such a creation, or faculty of mind, or the utterances of describers manage to tell of it? Even its smallest parts have made it impossible for the imagination to pick them out or for tongues to describe them.

Glorified is Allah who has disabled intellects from describing the creation which He placed openly before the eyes and which they see bounded, shaped, arranged and colored. He also disabled tongues from briefly describing its qualities and also from expanding in its praise. 129

The Bat

Describing the creation of bats, Imam Ali ('a) says,

Praise be to Allah Who is such that it is not possible to describe the reality of knowledge about Him, since His greatness has restrained the intellects, and therefore they cannot find the way to approach the extremity of His realm. He is Allah the True and the Manifesting of Truth. He is too True and too Manifest to be seen by eyes.

Intellects cannot comprehend Him by fixing limits for Him since in that case to Him would be attributed shape. Imagination cannot catch Him by fixing quantities for Him for in that case to Him would be attributed body. He created creatures without any example, and without the advice of a counsel, or the assistance of a helper. His creation was completed by

His command, and bowed to His obedience. It responded to Him and did not defy Him. It obeyed and did not resist.

An example of His delicate production, wonderful creation, and deep sagacity which He has shown us is found in these bats which keep hidden in the daylight although daylight reveals everything else, and are mobile in the night although the night shuts up every other living being; and how their eyes are dazzled and cannot make use of the light of the sun so as to be guided in their movements and so as to reach their known places through the direction provided by the sun.

Allah has prevented them from moving in the brightness of the sun and confined them to their places of hiding instead of going out at the time of its shining. Consequently, they keep their eyelids down in the day, treat night as a lamp, and go with its help in search of their livelihood. The darkness of night does not obstruct their sight nor does the gloom of darkness prevent them from movement.

As soon as the sun removes its veil and the light of morning appears, and the rays of its light enter upon the lizards in their holes, the bats pull down their eyelids on their eyes and live on what they had collected in the darkness of the night. Glorified is He Who has made the night as day for them to seek livelihood and made the day for rest and stay.

He has given them wings of flesh with which, at the time of need, they rise upwards for flying. They look like the ends of ears without feathers or bones. Of course, you can see the veins quite distinctly. They have two wings which are neither too thin so that they are turned in flying, nor too thick so that they prove heavy.

When they fly, their young ones hold on to them and seek refuge with them, getting down when they get down and rising up when they rise. The young does not leave them until its limbs become strong, its wings can support it for rising up, and it begins to recognize its places of living and its interest. Glorified is He Who creates everything without any previous sample by someone else. 130

The Locust

Imam Ali (‘a) says about the creation of the locust:

If you wish, you can tell about the locust (as well). Allah gave it two red eves, lighted for them two moon like pupils, made for it small ears, opened for it a suitable mouth, and gave it keen sense, gave it two teeth to cut with and two sickle-like feet to grip with.

The farmers are afraid of it in the matter of crops since they cannot drive it away even though they may join. The locust attacks the fields and satisfies its desires of hunger from them although its body is not equal to a thin finger.

The Ant

About the creation of the ant, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Had they pondered over the greatness of His power and the vastness of His bounty, they would have returned to the right path and feared the punishment of the Fire; but hearts are sick and eyes are impure.

Do they not see the small things He has created, how He strengthened their system, opened for them hearing and sight, and made for them bones and skins? Look at the ant with its small body and delicate form. It can hardly be seen in the corner of the eye, nor by the perception of the imagination; how it moves on the earth and leaps at its livelihood.

It carries the grain to its hole and deposits it in its place of stay. It collects during the summer for its winter and during strength for the period of its weakness. Its livelihood is guaranteed and it is fed according to fitness. Allah the Kind does not forget it and Allah the Giver does not deprive it, even though it may be in dry stone or fixed rocks.

If you have thought about its digestive tracts in its high and low parts, the carapace of its belly, and its eyes and its ears in its head, you would be amazed at its creation and you would feel difficulty in describing it. Exalted is He Who made it stand on its legs and erected it on its pillars of limbs. No other originator took part with Him in its origination and no one having power assisted Him in its creation.

If you tread on the paths of your imagination and reach its extremity, it will not lead you anywhere except that the Originator of the ant is the same as He Who is the Originator of the date-palm, because everything has the same delicacy and detail, and every living being has little difference. 131

Theology

Imam Ali (‘a) established the foundations and principles of theology (‘ilm Al- kalam: The branch of knowledge that deals with Islamic theistic religion and the organized body of knowledge dealing with the nature, attributes, and governance of God). All theologians have derived the methodologies of their researches from the Imam (‘a).

In this respect, Ibn Abi’l-Hadid says, ‘Theologians have quoted his (i.e. Imam Ali) words and transmitted his language. Hence, theology ends up with him and starts with him. For instance, the Mu’tazilah (a theological Muslim school) who are the people of true monotheism, moderation, and exact views and from whom all people learnt the art of theology,132 are pupils and companions of Imam Ali (‘a).

Their founder, Wasil ibn ‘Ata', studied under Abu-Hashim Abdullah the son of Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiyyah the son of Ali ibn Abi Talib. Abu-Hashim studied under his father, and his father studied under his father, the Imam (‘a). The students of the Ash’ariyyah School that is traced back to Abu’l-Hasan Ali ibn Isma’il Abu- Bishr Al-Ash’ari also derived their school from Imam Ali. Abu-Bishr, the founder, was the student of Abu-’Ali Al-Jiba'i.

Accordingly, the Ash’ariyyah finally trace back to the mentor and founder of Al-Mu’tazilah; namely, Ali ibn Abi Talib. To prove the tracing back of the Al-Imamiyyah and the Al-Zaydiyyah to Imam Ali is too obvious to require evidence.’133

The book of Nahj Al-Balaghah is full of theological articles with regard to the faith of monotheism, which is the key to and funda-

ment of theology.

Physics

Imam Ali (‘a) was the founder of the principles and methods of physics (phizya': The science that deals with the nature and properties of matter and energy). Concerning one of the theories of physics, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Every seer other than Him (i.e. Almighty Allah) is blind to see the hidden colors and the delicate bodies. 134

Many animals are unable to see the colors; rather, they see everything either white or black. Human beings can see the seven colors that are the colors of the visible spectrum. They range from 0.4 micron at the violet end of the spectrum to 0.8 micron at the red end. Human beings cannot see the lights whose wavelengths are beyond these two ends, such as the ultraviolet and the infrared. This means that the visibility of human beings is limited.

Almighty Allah sees all bodies and all colors apart from their lights and delicacy. Recently, it has been discovered that bees can distinguish the kinds of flowers from the highest point to which they can fly.

Imam Ali (‘a) says,

There is hidden knowledge in the experiments.

Accordingly, we must regard Imam Ali (‘a) as the founder of experimentalism (i.e. the principles of the empirical approach in science).

Electricity

Imam Ali (‘a) talked about electricity which is the key to evolution in human progress. One day, he was sitting on the bank of the River Euphrates and holding a rod in his hand. He struck the surface of water with the rod and said,

If I wish, I can produce light and fire from water.

This is an indication of the energy that lies in water, which can produce light; that is electricity, and fire; that is thermal energy.

About his hidden knowledge that he could not show because of the educational low level of the people who lived in his time, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

I have hidden knowledge; if I disclose it, you will start trembling like ropes in deep wells. 135

Medicine

In his statements and golden words, Imam Ali (‘a) presented many medical prescriptions and facts that reveal his skillfulness in this field of knowledge. About the wonderful systems of human body, the Imam (‘a) says,

You (i.e. human being) think that you are a small body, while in fact the greatest world is involved in you. Your remedy is inside you, but you cannot see it. Your malady is also because of you, but you do not feel it.

Protective System

Imam Ali (‘a) established a nutritional program that protects from illnesses and procures physical hygiene. He thus says,

Never eat unless you are hungry. Stop eating while you are still hungry. Chew everything you eat very well. Go to toilet before going to bed. If you follow these instructions, you will never need any medication. 136

On another occasion, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

People bring harm to themselves in three things: (1) in overeating, depending upon their health, (2) in overburdening things, depending upon their strength, and (3) in overworking, depending upon their endurance. 137

Breast Milk

Revealing the nutritional importance of breast milk, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

No milk that is suckled by a baby can be more blissful to it than the mother’s milk. 138

Geology

In his speeches, Imam Ali (‘a) referred to many geological facts. About the creation of the earth, he (‘a) says,

He created the earth and suspended it without being busy, retained it without support, made it stand without legs, raised it without pillars.

He (‘a) also says,

He brought forth creation through His Omnipotence, dispersed winds through His Compassion, and made firm the shaking earth with rocks. 139

He (‘a) says in another sermon,

Allah flowed springs of water from its high tops, distributed them through plains and low places, and moderated their movement by fixed rocks and high mountaintops. Then, its trembling came to a standstill because of the penetration of mountains in various parts of its surface and their being fixed in its deep areas, and their standing on its plains.

Philosophy

Imam Ali (‘a) was the first to establish the principles and rules of divine philosophy and the first to penetrate deeply into philosophy in general according to the method of argumentation and logic evidence.

It is reported that a Bedouin stood near Imam Ali (‘a) on the day of the Battle of the Camel and asked, ‘O Leader of the Believers,

do you say that Allah is One?'

The people rushed to him and said, 'O Bedouin, do you not see the condition of the Leader of the Believers ('a)? His mind is busy with several matters. It is not the time to ask such questions.'

However, Imam Ali ('a) said to them,

'Leave him alone. This Bedouin wants just what we want from these people (i.e. the enemies).'

The Imam ('a) then said to the man,

O Bedouin, there are four meanings implied for 'Allah is One.' Two of these implications are not proper for Him the Almighty, while the other two hold true. The two implications that are not proper are:

(1) It is improper to say, 'Allah is One,' in the sense of numeration. This is not proper since what has no second cannot be counted in numbers. Do you not see that whoever says 'Allah is the third of the three' is considered unbeliever?

(2) It is improper to say, 'Allah is One,' in the sense that He is one of the people, implicitly meaning that He is of a type of gender. This is not proper either, since it is a form of comparison while our Lord the Sublime is too great to make this comparison.

However, the two implied meanings that hold true are as follows:

(1) It is proper to say, 'Allah is One,' to imply that He is One and there exists nothing similar to Him. Our Lord is such.

(2) It is proper to say, 'Allah is One,' to imply that He, the Exalted and Sublime, is essentially and necessarily One. He is not divisible in the outside world, in the mind, or in the imagination. Our Lord the Exalted and Sublime is such. 140

Forbiddance Of Witchcraft

Imam Ali (‘a) forbade the use and practice of magic because it spreads deviation among people and leads to retardation. He (‘a) is thus reported to have said,

A sorcerer is like the nonbeliever; and the nonbelievers will be in Hellfire. 141

Forbiddance Of Fortune-Telling

Imam Ali (‘a) warned against fortune-telling. When he decided to march towards Al-Nahrawan to suppress the rising of the Khawarij, ‘Afif ibn Qays Al-Kindi said to him, ‘This hour is not good. If you set out at this time, then instead of victory and success, you will face defeat.’

However, Imam Ali (‘a) paid no heed to his view and ordered the army to march that very moment. In the result, the Khawarij suffered such a clear defeat that, out of their nine thousand combatants, only nine individuals survived by running away while the rest were killed.

Imam Ali (‘a) argued about astrology being wrong or incorrect in three ways; firstly, if the view of an astrologer were accepted as correct, it would mean falsification of the Holy Quran, because an astrologer claims to ascertain hidden things of the future by seeing the stars, while the Holy Quran says,

Say: ‘None either in the heavens or in the earth knows the unseen save Allah. (27:65)’

Secondly, under his misconception, an astrologer believes that he can know his benefit or harm through knowing the future. In that case, he would be regardless of turning to Allah and seeking His help, while this indifference towards Allah and self-reliance is a sort of heresy and atheism, which puts an end to his hope in Allah.

Thirdly, if he succeeds in any objective, he would regard this success to be the result of his knowledge of astrology, as a result of which he would praise himself rather than Almighty Allah, and will expect that whomever he guides in this manner, he too should be grateful to him rather than to the Lord.

These points do not apply to astrology to the extent it may be believed that the astrological findings are in the nature of effect of medicines which are subject to alteration at the will of Allah.

Hence, when the Imam ('a) decided to set out for the Battle of Al-Nahrawan, it was said to him, 'If you set out at this moment, then, according to astrology, I fear lest you will not be successful in your aim.'

The Imam ('a) answered,

Do you think that you can tell the hour when a man goes out and no evil befall him or can warn of the time at which if one goes out harm will accrue? Whoever testifies to this falsifies the Quran and becomes unmindful of Allah in achieving his desired objective and in warding off the undesirable. You cherish saying this so that he who acts on what you say should praise you rather than Allah because according to your misconception you have guided him about the hour in which he would secure benefit and avoid harm.

Then, Imam Ali ('a) advanced towards the people and said,

O people, beware of learning the science of stars except that with which guidance is sought on land or sea, because it leads to divining and an astrologer is a diviner, while the diviner is like the sorcerer, the sorcerer is like the unbeliever, and the unbeliever would be in Hell. Get forward in the name of Allah. 142

- 1. Ibn Al-taqtaqi, Al-Adab Al-Sultaniyyah, pp. 46.
- 2. Ibn Abi'l-Fath Al-Arbali, Kashf Al-Ghummah 1:114.
- 3. Rijal Al-Najashi, 226.
- 4. Rijal Al-Najashi, 296.

- 5. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 18:7.
- 6. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 7:407.
- 7. Waki’, Akhbar Al-Qusah 1:84.
- 8. Waki’, Akhbar Al-Qusah 1:5.
- 9. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib2:355.
- 10. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 18:174.
- 11. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 36.
- 12. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 16.
- 13. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib2:354.
- 14. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad 1:96.
- 15. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad 1:107.
- 16. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib2:356.
- 17. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib2:366.
- 18. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 7:216.
- 19. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Tahdhib Al-Ahkam 6:304.
- 20. A guardian of a woman is her closest relative who, according to the laws of Islam, has the right to give her in marriage.
- 21. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 18:206.
- 22. In the Islamic code of religious law, the punishment of a married adulterer is stoning to death.
- 23. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Tahdhib Al-Ahkam 6:304.
- 24. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad, pp. 68.
- 25. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad, pp. 97.
- 26. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 7:265.
- 27. Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, Al-turuq Al-Hukmiyyah, pp. 53.
- 28. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib2:360.
- 29. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib2:363.
- 30. Ibn Al-Jawzi, Al-Adhkiya', pp. 32.
- 31. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu’l-Faqih 4:28.
- 32. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib2:363.
- 33. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib2:364.
- 34. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 66.

- 35. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad, pp. 109.
- 36. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad, pp. 95.
- 37. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad, pp. 101.
- 38. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad, pp. 113.
- 39. Musnad Ahman ibn Hanbal 1:104.
- 40. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 18:458.
- 41. Tafsir Al-'Ayyashi 2:75.
- 42. Shaykh Al-Saduq, 'Uyun Akhbar Al-Ridha 2:65.
- 43. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Tahdhib Al-Ahkam 6:239.
- 44. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 18:244.
- 45. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 7:397.
- 46. A decent witness (shahid 'adl) is a testifier whose testimony meets the conditions of admissible testimonies according to the law of Islam.
- 47. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 18:295.
- 48. It is worth mentioning that the punishment that the Holy Prophet (S) and Imam Ali ('a) applied to larceners, according to some narrations, was cutting off their fingertips rather than their hands, because the fingertips have been also referred to as hands in many texts.

  Besides, according to Arabic language, a part of a thing can hold the name of that thing as a whole. Sharif Al-Murtadha, a famous master jurisprudent in the field of Shi'ite Muslim jurisprudence, depending upon a report mentioned by Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi in Kanz Al- 'Ummal 5:522, H. 13923, and Ibn kazm in Al-Muhalla 11:357, as well as many other reference books, entailing that Imam Ali ('a), executing the religiously prescribed punishment on a larcener, cut off his hand from the roots of the fingers, decides that the hand of larceners should be cut off from the roots of the fingers, as same as Imam Ali ('a) did. (Al-Intisar, pp. 529)
  However, scholars of Muslim jurisprudence have various opinions about this issue as regards the amount of the hand of a larcener that should be cut off. [Translator]

- 49. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Tahdhib Al-Ahkam 6:219.

- 50. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 18:243.
- 51. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu’l-Faqih 4:24.
- 52. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 7:244.
- 53. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 18:252.
- 54. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu’l-Faqih 3:27.
- 55. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 7:389.
- 56. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 18:261.
- 57. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Tahdhib Al-Ahkam 6:136.
- 58. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 18:263.
- 59. ’Ali ibn Ibrahim Al-Qummi, Tafsir Al-Qummi 1:451.
- 60. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 18:399.
- 61. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 7:185; Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu’l-Faqih 4:22; Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 18:341.
- 62. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 7:485.
- 63. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 18:186.
- 64. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Al-Tahdhib 6:319.
- 65. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Man-La-Yahsuruhu’l-Faqih 6:319.
- 66. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 3:253.
- 67. Al-kimyari, Qurb Al-Isnad, pp. 42.
- 68. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 18:181.
- 69. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Tahdhib Al-Ahkam 6:232.
- 70. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 18:208.
- 71. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad. According to Shaykh Al-Kulayni’s Al-Kafi 7:327, Imam Ali (‘a) clarified the distribution of the eight dirhams among the two men as follows:

  The Imam (‘a) asked them,

  ‘When you ate, one of you gave five loaves of bread and the other three. Is this true?’

  ‘Yes, it is,’ they answered.

  ‘Your guest ate the same quantity you both ate. Is this true?’

  Imam Ali (‘a) asked.

‘Yes, it is,’ they answered.

‘This means that each one of you (the three) ate two loaves and two thirds of a loaf. Is it true?’ asked the Imam (‘a).

‘Yes, it is,’ they answered.

Imam Ali (‘a) clarified,

‘So, this means that you, the owner of the three loaves, ate two loaves and two thirds of a loaf, the owner of the five loaves ate two loaves and two thirds of a loaf, and the guest ate two loaves and two thirds of a loaf as well. This means that one third of a loaf only remained with you (the owner of the three loaves) and two loaves and one third of a loaf remained with the owner of the five loaves. Thus, the guest gave you eight dirhams, which means that he gave you one dirham for each one third of a loaf (but not one dirham for each loaf, because they ate the same quantity the guest ate). Thus, he must have given seven dirhams to the owner of the five loaves and one dirham only to the owner of three loaves.

- 72. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Tahdhib Al-Ahkam 6:315.
- 73. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 37.
  Commenting on this judgment, Shaykh Al-Mufid, in Kitab Al-Irshad, says, ‘That was a judgment in a case for which there was no way of establishing the truth other than by it. Do you not see that there was no evidence to distinguish the killer from the killed and no evidence of intention to kill? Therefore, the judgment was made according to their rule of accidental killing and on the basis of confusion about the actions of the killer and killed.’
- 74. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad, pp. 118.
- 75. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad, pp. 113.
- 76. Al-Tustari, Qasa' Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 29.
- 77. Al-Tustari, Qasa' Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 33.
- 78. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 47.

- 79. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 94.
- 80. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 97.
- 81. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad.
- 82. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 101.
- 83. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 101.
- 84. Al-Tustari, Qasa' Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 94.
- 85. Al-Tustari, Qasa' Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 43.
- 86. Dhabihullah Mahallati, Al-Haqq Al-Mubin fi Qasa' Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 193.
- 87. As a law, it is invalid for a non-Muslim man to marry a Muslim woman.
- 88. Al-Tustari, Qasa' Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 51.
- 89. Al-Tustari, Qasa' Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 51.
- 90. Al-Tustari, Qasa' Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 55.
- 91. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 72.
- 92. Al-Tustari, Qasa' Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 57.
- 93. Al-Tustari, Qasa' Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 58.
- 94. Al-Tustari, Qasa' Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 59.
- 95. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 92.
- 96. Al-Tustari, Qasa' Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 40.
- 97. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 70.
- 98. Najm Al-Din Al-’Askari, Ali wa’l-Khulafa', pp. 287
- 99. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 82.
- 100. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 84.
- 101. Al-Tustari, Qasa' Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 41.
- 102. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 96.

- 103. Muhsin Al-Amin Al-’Amili, ‘Aja'ib Ahkam Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 102.
- 104. Upon saying this word, Imam Ali (‘a) pointed to his bosom.
- 105. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 147.
- 106. George Jordaq, Rawa'i’ Nahj Al-Balaghah, pp. 230.
- 107. Al-Mirjahani, Misbah Al-Balaghah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 186.
- 108. Al-Mirjahani, Misbah Al-Balaghah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 177.
- 109. Al-Hurr Al-’Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi’ah 8:551, S. 123, H. 2.
- 110. Yaqut Al-kamawi, Mu’jam Al-Udaba' 1:73.
- 111. Ibn Sa’d, Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 6:116.
- 112. Labib Baysun, Tasnif Nahj Al-Balaghah, pp. 2302.
- 113. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 154.
- 114. Al-Dashti & Al-Muhammadi, Al-Mu’jam Al-Mufahras li-Alfas Nahj Al-Balaghah, pp. 109.
- 115. Al-Dashti & Al-Muhammadi, Al-Mu’jam Al-Mufahras li-Alfas Nahj Al-Balaghah, pp. 110.
- 116. Al-Mirjahani, Misbah Al-Balaghah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah, pp. 177.
- 117. Ibn Shu’bah Al-karrani, Tuhaf Al-’Uqul, pp. 201.
- 118. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 1: 41.
- 119. Al-Qalqashandi, Subh Al-A’sha 3:25.
- 120. Al-Qalqashandi, Subh Al-A’sha 3:149.
- 121. Tash Kubri Zadah, Miftah Al-Sa’adah 1:303.
- 122. Because the copies of the Holy Quran were written without dots and diacritical marks (i.e. harakah), the Bedouin misread the word khati'un (wrongdoers) with the word khatun (steppers).
- 123. Abu’l-katam Ahmad Al-Razi, Al-Zinah fi’l-Kalimat Al-Islamiyyah Al-’Arabiyyah, pp. 72; Ibn Al-Anbari, Al-Nuzhah, pp. 8.
- 124. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:18-9.
- 125. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:19.
- 126. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 1.
- 127. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 91.

- 128. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Item: Big bang.
- 129. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 165.
- 130. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 154.
- 131. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 184.
- 132. Of course, this is the viewpoint of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, because he belongs to the School of Mu'tazilah.
- 133. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:17.
- 134. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 61.
- 135. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 5
- 136. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal, pp. 228.
- 137. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 20:263.
- 138. Al-Mirjahani, Misbah Al-Balaghah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah, pp. 171.
- 139. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 1.
- 140. Muhammad Husayn Al-tabataba'i, Al-Mizan fi Tafsir Al-Quran 1:408, as quoted from Shaykh Al-Saduq's Al-Khisal.
- 141. Murtadha Al-Ansari, Al-Makasib Al-Muharramah 2:279.
- 142. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 79.

Prophecies Of Imam Ali

The faculty of prophesying (i.e. the divinely inspired utterances and the foretelling of future events) is one of the peculiarities of the prophets and their divinely appointed successors, because their prophecies indicate the accuracy of their Prophethood. In this regard, the Holy Prophet (S) foretold of many matters that came true after his passing away, not to mention the prophecies mentioned in the Holy Quran.

For instance, in the Battle of the Ditch (khandaq), the Holy Prophet (S) foretold that Muslims would conquer Syria, Persia, and Yemen.

On another occasion, he (S) foretold Imam Ali ('a) that he would be martyred at the hands of the most wretched person.

The Holy Prophet (S) foretold Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' (‘a) that she would be the first to catch him to the other world.

He (S) foretold Muslims that his grandson Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) would be slain on the land of a region called Karbala'.

He (S) foretold that one of his wives would ride on a camel and she would be barked by the dogs of a region called Al-kaw'ab.

He (S) foretold ‘Ammar ibn Yasir that he would be martyred at the hands of the transgressing party and that the last drink he would drink in this world would be a cup of milk.

He (S) foretold, yet secretly, that his family members would be exposed to oppression at the hands of the Umayyad and ‘Abbasid dynasties.

Imam Ali (‘a), in his capacity as the keeper of the secrets of the Holy Prophet (S) and as the divinely selected successor of him (S), foretold of many events that came true.

When people pledged allegiance to Imam Ali (‘a), he headed for the Prophet’s Mosque wearing the turban, garment, and sandals of the Holy Prophet (S), climbed the minbar, crossed his fingers, put them under his belly, and said,

O groups of people, pose your questions to me before you lose me. This (chest) is the container of knowledge. This is the saliva of Allah’s Messenger. Here is what Allah’s Messenger has fed me perfectly and quietly. Ask me, because I have the knowledge of the past and the last generations’

Ask me before you lose me. I swear by Him Who split the grain and created the souls; if you ask me about each Quranic verse one by one, I will tell you whether it was revealed at night or in daylight, at Makkah or at Al-Madinah, and during a journey or in hometown; and I will tell you whether the verse is repealing (another verse) or is repealed (by another

verse), whether it is decisive or allegorical; and I will tell you about its interpretation and about the reason for its revelation. 1

In fact, Imam Ali (‘a) very frequently asked people to pose their questions before him, because he had the knowledge of all things and had the answers to all questions.

On one occasion, he (‘a) said,

O people, ask me before you lose me. Verily, there is very much knowledge between my two sides. 2

On another occasion, he (‘a) said,

You may ask me before you lose me. I swear by Him Who grasps my soul; if you ask me about anything that will come to pass in the period between your existence and the coming of the Hour of Resurrection, and if you ask me about any group that will guide one hundred persons to the true guidance or any group that will mislead one hundred persons, I will in details inform you about the founder, leader, and driver of any of these groups. 3

On another occasion, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

Ask me before you lose me. I will definitely answer any question that is posed to me about whatever is beneath the Divine Throne. None after me will claim this except a liar or an impostor. 4

On another occasion, the Imam (‘a) said,

O people, ask me before you lose me. Behold! I know the paths of the heavens better than I know the paths of the earth. 5

Let us now present a number of Imam Ali’s prophecies.

Foretelling The Assassination Of Imam Al-Hasan

At the last hour of his lifetime, Imam Ali (‘a) fainted several times. In one of these times, he recovered consciousness and found his son Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) weeping heavily. He thus said to his son,

O son, what for is this weeping? Your father will see neither fear nor horror after this day. O son, do not weep. You will be killed by poison. 6

Foretelling The Martyrdom Of Imam Al-Husayn

(1) Abdullah ibn Naji reported that his father once was in the company of Imam Ali (‘a) on his march towards Siffin. When the Imam (‘a) passed by Nineveh, he was in extreme pain and horror. He thus raised his voice and said in a sad tone,

Be patient, O Abu-’Abdullah! Be patient at the bank of the Euphrates.

The companion asked, ‘Who is Abu-’Abdullah?’

The Imam (‘a) answered,

One day, I visited the Messenger of Allah (S) and found him shedding heavy tears. I thus asked, ‘O Allah’s Prophet, has anyone enraged you? What for are your eyes shedding such flowing tears?’

The Prophet (S) answered, ‘Archangel Gabriel has just left me after he told me that my community will slay my grandson Al-Husayn. May I show you some of the dust on which he will be slain?’

‘Yes, you may,’ I answered.

The Prophet (S) extended his hand and grasped some dust. Once my eyes fell on the dust, I could not stop weeping. 7

(2) Hirthimah ibn Qays reported that when Imam Ali (‘a) resided in the land of Karbala' to lead a congregational prayer during his

journey towards Siffin, He, upon the accomplishment of the prayer, took a handful of the dust, smelt it, and said,

Oh for you, O dust! From you, O dust, a people will be resurrected and allowed to Paradise without judgment. 8

(3) 'Urwah Al-Bariqi reported that Mikhnaf ibn Sulaym sent him to Imam Ali ('a) and he could catch him in Karbala' where the Imam ('a) was pointing to the land with his hand and saying,

At this very place! At this very place!

A man inquired about the meaning of these words, and the Imam ('a) answered,

The precious family of Muhammad shall reside at this very place. Woe will betide them at your hands, and woe will betide you at their hands.

When the Imam ('a) was asked for an explanation, he said,

You will kill them; therefore, woe will happen to them at your hands. Accordingly, you will be sent to Hellfire due to killing them; and this is the woe that will betide you because of them. 9

(4) Al-Hasan ibn Kathir reported on the authority of his father that Imam Ali ('a) stopped in the land of Karbala'. A man said, 'This is the land of Karbala'.' The Imam ('a) sadly said,

Yes, it is. It is the land of agony (karb) and misfortune (bala).

The Imam ('a) then pointed to some certain places and said,

At this very place, they will install their tents. At this very place, their blood will be shed! 10

(5) Abu-kabrah reported that he was in the company of Imam Ali ('a) when he climbed the minbar of the Al-Kufah Mosque, praised and thanked Almighty Allah, and said,

What will you do when misfortune will befall the offspring of your Prophet under your eyes?

The attendants answered, 'We will do as excellently as possible for the sake of Allah.'

Refuting their claim, Imam Ali ('a) said,

I swear by Him Who grasps my soul in His hand; misfortune will befall them in your presence and you will come out to fight against them.

The Imam ('a) then cited this poetic verse as explanation:

They brought him seductively and then abandoned him hoping for redemption. Behold! They will have neither redemption nor accepted excuse. 11

(6) Abu-Hirthimah reported that he was in the company of Imam Ali ('a) on the bank of the River Euphrates near Karbala'. They passed by a tree under which there were droppings of a deer. The Imam ('a) picked up a handful of dust, smelt it, and said,

From this area, seventy thousand persons will be allowed to Paradise without judgment. 12

(7) Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

Al-Husayn shall be slain. I do know the dust on which he shall be slain. It is between the two rivers. 13

(8) Thabit ibn Suwayd ibn Ghaflah reported that while Imam Ali ('a), one day, was delivering a speech, a man stood up and said, 'O Leader of the Believers, I have just come from Wadi Al-Qira and learnt that Khalid ibn 'Arfatah had died. Please, implore Allah's forgiveness for him.'

The Imam ('a) answered,

This is untrue. He has not died and he will not die before he leads an army of deviation. The bearer of his pennon will be kabib ibn kimaz.

Another man stood up and said, 'O Leader of the Believers, I am kabib ibn kimaz and I am one of your devotees.'

The Imam ('a) asked repeatedly,

Are you kabib?

Each time, the man answered in the affirmative. The Imam ('a) said,

Yes, by Allah, you will. You are the bearer of the pennon and you will bear it and enter from this very gate.

The Imam ('a) pointed to one of the gates of Al-Kufah Mosque known as Bab Al-fil.

Thabit commented: Some years later, 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad ordered 'Umar ibn Sa'd to lead an army for fighting Al-Husayn. Khalid ibn 'Arfatah was on the front of the army while kabib ibn kimaz was the standard-bearer. Carrying the pennon, I saw kabib entering the mosque from the gate of Bab Al-fil.[14]

(9) Abd Al-Samin reported that Imam Ali ('a), in one of his speeches, said,

Ask me before you lose me. By Allah, I will answer all of your questions whether you ask me about a bygone thing or a coming event.

Sa'd ibn Abi-Waqqas stood up and asked, 'O Leader of the Believers, can you tell me the number of the hairs in my head and by beard?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

By Allah, you have just asked me a question about which my dear friend the Messenger of Allah (S) had foretold that you would ask it. Under the

origin of each hair in your head and your beard, there is a devil sitting there. In your house, there is a goat-like (person) who will kill my son Al- Husayn.

At that time, 'Umar the son of Sa'd ibn Abi-Waqqas was still creeping child.15

(10) One day, Imam Ali ('a) said in one of his sermons,

Ask me before you lose me' If I wish, I can tell each one of you about his end result, the issues in which he will engage himself, and all of his affairs.

Tamim ibn Usamah, a wicked man, asked sarcastically, 'How many hairs are there in my head?'

The Imam ('a) glanced at him and said,

By Allah, I know how many hairs there are in your head. However, if I tell you, you will ask for evidence, which is now missing. Nevertheless, I will tell you about your coming deeds and words. I have been told that on each hair of your head, there is an angel cursing you and a devil instigating you. The evidence is that there is in your house a goat-like (son) who will slay the son of Allah's Messenger and urge people to slay him. 16

(11) Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said to Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib,

My son Al-Husayn will be slain while you will not stand to help him, although you will be able to do.

Al-Bara' answered, 'This will never happen, O Leader of the Believers.'17

(12) Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

I see coming that palaces shall be built around the tomb of Al-Husayn and marketplaces shall surround the tomb. After days and nights from now, the tomb of Al-Husayn shall be a center of pilgrimage from all

provinces. This shall come to pass after the extermination of the descendants of Marwan. 18

Prophesying The Number Of The Troops

When Imam Ali (‘a) sent a message to the people of Al-Kufah asking for their help against the rebellions, he said to Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas,

This day, my son Al-Hasan will come to me along with exactly ten thousand horsemen and infantry soldiers; neither minus one nor plus one.

Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas, after that incident, said:

When Al Hasan along with the troops arrived there, I had no other concern but to ask the clerk about the number of the troops. ‘They are ten thousand horsemen and infantry soldiers; neither minus one nor plus one,’ said the clerk. I realized that the prophecy of the Imam (‘a) was one item of the knowledge he had received from the Holy Prophet (S).19

Prophesying The Martyrdoms Of Some Companions

‘Amr Ibn Al-Damq

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have asked ‘Amr ibn Al-kamq,

‘Where have you resided?’

‘I resided in the quarter of my folks,’ answered ‘Amr. Imam Ali (‘a) instructed,

‘Do not reside there.’

The Imam (‘a) warned ‘Amr against settling in the quarter of his folks (i.e. tribe) because they would not be able to protect him against any misfortune. He (‘a) rather ordered him to live in the quarter of the Banu-’Amr ibn ‘Amir tribe, because they would not give him up in calamities.

The Imam (‘a) then said to ‘Amr with sad tone,

After my departure from this world, you will be slain and your head will be cut off. It will be the first head in Islam to be moved from one place to another. Your slayer will encounter anguish. Except for the quarter of the Banu-’Amr ibn ‘Amir who will neither give you up nor disappoint you, the peoples of all other quarters will give you up totally. 20

Maytham Al-Tammar

Prophesying Maytham’s martyrdom, I*mam Ali (‘a) said to him,*

After my passing away, you will be arrested and crucified. The next day, your nose and mouth will bleed so heavily that your beard will turn red. On the third day, you will be stabbed to death with a lance.

The place where you will be crucified is at the door of the house of ‘Amr ibn kurayth. You will be among other nine persons and your cross will be the shortest and the nearer to the ground. I will show you the date-palm tree on whose trunk you will be crucified. 21

Rashid Al-Hajari

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said to Rashid,

How will your patience be when the illegitimate son of the Umayyads will summon you and cut off your two hands, two legs, and tongue?

Rashid asked, ‘Will this lead me to Paradise?’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

You will be always with me in this world and the other world. 22

Juwayriyah Al-'Abdi

Imam Ali ('a) said to Juwayriyah ibn Mus-hir Al-'Abdi,

I swear by Him Who grasps my soul in His Hand, you will be pulled before the ignoble, base-born man who will cut off your hand and your leg. Then, he will crucify you under a short trunk of a tree. 23

Mazra'

Imam Ali ('a) told Mazra' that he would be crucified between two terraces of the mosque.24

Hujr Ibn 'Adi

Imam Ali ('a) said to Hujr ibn 'Adi,

What will your answer be when you are summoned to repudiate me?

Hujr answered, 'By Allah, if I will be cut into pieces by swords and cast into fire, I will prefer that to rejecting you.'

Imam Ali ('a) said to him,

May Allah lead you successfully to ever item of decency and may He reward you abundantly on behalf of your Prophet's Household. 25

Qambar

When the tyrannical governor Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf arrested Qambar the servant of Imam Ali ('a), he asked him to choose the kind of death. Qambar answered, 'You may choose for me the kind of death, because I will kill you the same way you kill me. However,

the Leader of the Believers (i.e. Imam Ali) told me that I would be slaughtered wrongfully.'

Thus, Al-Hajjaj ordered his men to slaughter Qambar.

Kumayl Ibn Ziyad

Imam Ali ('a) informed Kumayl that he would be killed at the hands of Al- Hajjaj ibn Yusuf.[26]

Imam Ali Prophesies His Martyrdom

On more than one occasion, Imam Ali ('a) informed that he would not die naturally; rather, he would be killed at the hands of the most wretched of all people. Let us now refer to some of these occasions:

(1) Rawh ibn Umayyah Al-Du'ali reported that Imam Ali ('a), once, fell terribly ill that we feared lest he would die. When he recovered health, we visited and congratulated him for restoration to health. He ('a) answered,

I did not fear lest I would depart this life, because the veracious and the divinely verified Prophet (S) told me that I would not die until I would struck (by sword) on this (i.e. the left side of his forehead) so intensely that this (i.e. the beard) would be dyed with the blood of this (i.e. the head). He (i.e. the Prophet) told me that I would be killed by the most wretched person of this community'[27]

(2) Abdullah ibn Sab' reported that Imam Ali ('a) said in one of his speeches,

By Allah Who split the grain and created the souls, this beard will be dyed with the blood of this head.

A man stood up and said, 'By Allah, we will eradicate the offspring of any one who dares to do so.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

Remember Allah. I plead that none will be killed in retaliation for me except my killer. 28

(3) Abu'l-tufayl said the following:

I was present in the funeral procession of Abu-Bakr the day he died. I was also present when 'Umar took oath of allegiance and Ali was sitting on the side.

A young, handsome, well-dressed Jewish boy came. He was a descendent of Prophet Aaron and he stood on a place that was above 'Umar and asked, 'O amir Al-mu'minin, are you the most knowledgeable person in this nation with their book and the commands of their Prophet?'

'Umar kept his head down.

The Jew then said, 'I meant you.' He repeated his words until 'Umar finally asked, 'Why is that?'

He said, 'I have doubts about my religion and I have come to you for guidance.'

'Umar said, 'Go to this young man.'

The Jew asked, 'Who is this young man?'

'Umar answered, 'He is Ali ibn Abi Talib, the cousin of the Messenger of Allah, the father of Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn the grandsons of the Prophet, and the husband of Fatimah the daughter of the Prophet.'

The young Jew then went to Ali and asked, 'Are you such a person?'

(Imam) Ali said,

Yes, I am such a person.

The Jew said, 'I want to ask you about three and three and one.'

(Imam) Ali smiled and asked,

O descendant of Aaron, what prevents you from saying 'seven' (instead of three and three and one)?

The Jew said, 'I ask about three. If you answer me, then I will ask you about the rest. If you cannot answer, then I will assume that there are no scholars among you.'

Imam Ali asked,

I adjure you by the Lord in whom you believe, if I answer whatever you ask, will you then leave your religion and accept our religion?

He said, 'I have come for no other reason but that.'

Imam Ali said,

You may pose your questions.

He said, 'Tell me about the first drop of blood that was spilled on earth, what drop was that? Tell me about the first fountain that gushed out on earth. Which one was it? Tell me about the first thing that moved on earth; what was that?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered these questions, and the Jew then said, 'Tell me about the other three. Tell me about Muhammad; Kow many Imams (i.e. leaders with divine authority) who possess the quality of justice will be there as his successors? In which garden of Paradise will he be? Who will be with him in Paradise?'

Imam Ali answered,

O descendant of Aaron, there will be twelve fair Imams as successors of Muhammad. No one's betrayal will harm them and they will not feel frightened because of people's opposition to them. In the matters of religion, they will be stronger than the firm mountains on earth. In Paradise, Muhammad will dwell with the Twelve Imams who possess the noble quality of justice.

The Jew said, 'By Allah save Whom no one deserves to be worshipped and obeyed, you have said the truth. I find them in the book of my father Aaron. He has written it in his own handwriting. My uncle Moses had dictated to him. Now, tell me about the 'one'. Tell me about the executor of the will of Muhammad: how long will he live after him? Will he die or will he be killed?

Imam Ali ('a) said,

O descendant of Aaron, he will live after him thirty years, no less and no more. Then, he will be hit with a strike here, (meaning over his head), and then this (beard) will be stained with this (blood from his head).

The Jew screamed loudly, broke his Jewish religious object, and said, 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah; One and Only Lord Who has no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, and I bear witness that you are the executor of his will. You must be above all and no one must be above you. Your greatness must be acknowledged and you must not be weakened.'

Imam Ali ('a) then took him to his house and taught him the religion of Islam according to the true guidance.[29]

(5) Declaring the martyrdoms of his two sons Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn and him, Imam Ali ('a) said,

Behold! By Allah, I as well as the two sons of mine shall be slain. In the last of the age of this world, Allah shall send a man from my offspring to demand with retaliation for us. He will be hidden from sights so that the people of deviation will be discriminated until the people of ignorance

will believe that Allah has nothing to do with the Family of Muhammad! 30

Prophesying The Movements Of The Black Stone

Referring to the post on which the Al-Kufah Mosque leaned, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

I see coming that the Black Stone 31 *will be installed at this very place. Woe betide them! The excellence of the Black Stone does not lie in itself; rather, it lies in its place and foundation. The Black Stone will stay here for a while and it will be taken to there (i.e. Bahrain) for another while. Then, it will be taken back to its original place.* 32

Prophesying The Massacre Of Fakh

Imam Ali (‘a) foretold the martyrdoms of his descendants at a place called Fakh at the hands of the tyrannical ‘Abbasid ruler, Al-Hadi. Describing these martyrs, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

They are the best of the inhabitants of the earth. 33

Prophesying The Martyrdom Of The Pure-Souled

Imam Ali (‘a) prophesied that a man from his descendants would revolt against the tyrannical ruler and would be martyred in Al-Madinah at a place called Ahjar Al-Zayt.34

Further details can be seen in the book of Hayat Al-Imam Musa ibn Ja’far by Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi.

Prophesying The Martyrdom Of Ibrahim

Imam Ali (‘a) prophesied the martyrdom of his descendant Ibrahim ibn Abdullah ibn Al-Hasan who, along with his brother, revolted against the tyrannical ‘Abbasid ruler, Abu-Ja’far Al-Mansur, and were martyred.

About Ibrahim, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

He (Ibrahim) will be killed after he achieves victory and he will be overcome after he achieves triumph. He will be hit by an arrow whose shooter is unknown and this arrow will kill him. How miserable them shooter will be! May Allah paralyze his two hands and weaken his arm! 35

Prophesying The Advent Of Imam Al-Mahdi

(1) Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said to Imam Al-Husayn (‘a),

O Husayn, the ninth of your descendants shall be the one who undertakes the establishment of the truth, demonstrates the true religion, and spreads justice.

Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) asked,

‘Will this take place unquestionably?’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

Yes, it will. I swear it by Him Who sent Muhammad with Prophethood and chose him (for it) from among all of His created beings. However, his advent shall be preceded by occultation and perplexity during which none shall keep himself steady on the true religion except the sincere ones, who connect directly with the spirit of certitude, with whom Allah

has made covenant concerning loyalty to our leadership, in whose hearts Allah has written faith, and whom He has aided with a spirit from him. 36

(2) Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

This son of mine is a chief, just as the Messenger of Allah (S) has named him as chief and master. In the future, a man from his progeny, having the same name of your Prophet, shall appear at a time of negligence, absence of the truth, and prevalence of oppression.

The inhabitants and denizens of the heavens shall be elated by his advent. He is a man with a bright forehead, a high nose, a strong belly, and open legs. There is a mole on his right cheek and his teeth are shining. He will fill in the earth with justice in the same way as it will have been filled with injustice and inequity. 37

(3) In one of his sermons, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

Then, he who represents me in my family members shall be a man who orders in accordance with the order of Allah and he shall be powerful and judging according to the judgment of Allah. That shall come to pass after a dusty and scandalous time at which misfortunes will be too hard to bear, hope will be cut off, and bribes will be welcomed. 38

(4) Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah reported Imam Ali (‘a) as saying,

Al-Mahdi belongs to us. He shall appear at the last of the age of this world. There is no other mahdiin any other nation to be expected except him. 39

(5) Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

Allah shall bring forth a people whom He loves and they love Him. From amongst them, one stranger; namely, Al-Mahdi shall prevail. He will prevail on the countries of Muslims safely. Time will be pure for him, his words will be listened to and obeyed by the aged and the youths alike, and he will fill in the earth with justice as it has been filled with injustice. 40

(6) Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah reported that he once came to Imam Ali (‘a) and found him thinking deeply and beating the ground. Al-Asbagh asked, ‘O Leader of the Believers, what for are you thinking and beating the ground? Do you have any desire in this world?’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

Nay, by Allah! I have never desired for this world or for leadership even for a single day. I have been thinking of one who will be born from the eleventh descendant of mine; namely, Al-Mahdi who shall fill the earth with justice as same as it would be filled with injustice and wrong. He will be the cause of perplexity and he will have an occultation during which many peoples will deviate and many others will find the true path.

Al-Asbagh asked, ‘Will this come to pass?’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

Yes, it will. This has been predetermined (by Allah). How can you have knowledge with such a matter? O Asbagh, these are the most virtuous people of this community along with the most righteous members of this progeny.

Al-Asbagh asked, ‘What will happen after that?’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

Then, Allah shall do whatever He wills. Verily, Allah has His Own wills, goals, and end results. 41

The Lad Of Thaqif

Imam Ali (‘a) was delivering a speech about future events when A’sha Bahilah who was still a boy interrupted the Imam’s speech and said deniably, ‘Your discourse is very similar to myths!’

The Imam (‘a) glanced at him and said,

If you have committed a sin for what you have just said, then may Allah prevail on you the boy of Thaqif!

Some men asked about that boy of Thaqif, and the Imam (‘a) answered,

He is a boy who will prevail on this city. He shall violate all the prohibitions of Allah and he shall behead this boy (i.e. A’sha Bahilah)’ He will rule over you for twenty years’ He will then die a natural death. 42

On another occasion, Imam Ali (‘a), predicting the future of the people of Al- Kufah, said,

By Allah, a tall lad of swinging gait from the Banu-Thaqif tribe will be placed over you. He will eat away your vegetation and melt your fat. So, O man of the beetle, 43 *is that all?* 44

Prophesying The Future Of Marwan And His Sons

When Marwan ibn Al-hakam was taken as prisoner of the Battle of the Camel, Imam Al-Hasan and Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) interceded with their father to release him, provided that he would swear allegiance to the Imam (‘a). However, Imam Ali (‘a) dispensed with the allegiance of Marwan ibn Al-hakam and declared,

He has already sworn allegiance to me after the slaying of ‘Uthman. I do no need his allegiance to me. His hand (with which he will swear allegiance) is Jewish. If he swears allegiance to me with the palm of his hand, he will betray with his forefinger. Behold! He will have leadership that will be as short and dirty as a dog licking its nose. He (Marwan) is the father of the four rams. The community will have to suffer a bloody day at his and his son’s hands. 45

The Umayyad Rulers

About the reign of Mu'awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan, Imam Ali ('a) said,

Soon after me, there will be put on you a man with a broad mouth and a big belly. He will swallow whatever he gets and will crave for what he does not get. You should kill him but I know you will not kill him.

He will command you to abuse me and to renounce me. As for abusing, you do abuse me, because that will mean purification for me and salvation for you. As regards renunciation, you should not renounce me, because I have been born on the natural religion (Islam) and I was foremost in accepting it as well as in migrating. 46

On another occasion, Imam Ali ('a) said,

Beware that the worst mischief for you in my view is the mischief of the Umayyad dynasty, because it is blind and it creates darkness. Its sway is general but its ill effects are for particular people. He who remains clear-sighted in it will be affected by distress, and he who remains blind in it will avoid the distress.

By Allah, you will find the Umayyad dynasty after me the worst of all people for yourselves, like the old unruly she-camel that bites with its mouth, beats with its forelegs, kicks with its hind legs, and refuses to be milked.

They will remain over you until they will leave among you only those who benefit them or those who do not harm them. Their calamity will continue until your seeking help from them will become like the seeking of help by the slave from his master or of the follower from the leader.

Their mischief will come to you like evil eyed fear and pre-Islamic fragments, wherein there will be no minaret of guidance nor any sign of salvation to be seen. 47

Warning against the oppression of the Umayyad dynasty, Imam Ali ('a) said,

By Allah, there will be left no prohibition of Allah but they (i.e. the Umayyads) will make it lawful and no pledge but they will break it, until

there will remain no house of bricks, or of woolen tents, but their oppression will enter it.

Their bad dealings will make them wretched, until two groups of crying complainants will rise; one will cry for his religion, and the other for this world; and the help of one of you to one of them will be like the help of a slave to his master; namely, when he is present, he obeys him; but when the master is away, he backbites him. The most distressed of you all will be he who bears best belief about Allah. If Allah grants you safety, then accept it; and if you are put in trouble, then endure it, because surely good result is for the God-fearing. 48

Prophesying The Killing Of Zur'ah

When Imam Ali ('a) returned to Al-Kufah after the Battle of Siffin, many men of the Khawarij accompanied him not to mention many others who resided at Al-Nukhaylah. Kurqus ibn Zuhayr Al-Sa'di and Zur'ah ibn Al-Burj Al-ta'i, two chiefs of the Khawarij, met Imam Ali ('a). Kurqus said to the Imam ('a), 'Repent from your fault and lead us out to fight against Mu'awiyah.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

I had warned you against consenting to the arbitration, but you refused to obey me. Now, you are considering it a sin that I committed! Verily, it is not a sin; rather, it was out of weakness of your reason and failure of management against which I have already warned you.

Zur'ah said to the Imam ('a), 'By Allah, if you do not declare your repentance from the arbitration, I will kill you.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

Misery may betide you! How wretched you are! I see coming that you will be killed and wind will blow on your dead body. 49

Prophesying The Rule Of Abd Al-Malik Ibn Marwan

Predicting the rule of Abd Al-Malik and the bloodshed that would take place during his reign, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

I see coming that he is shouting in Syria and is extending his banners to the outskirts of Al-Kufah. He is bent towards it like the biting of the she-camel. He has covered the ground with heads. His mouth is wide open and the trampling of his footsteps on the ground has become heavy. His advance is broad and his attacks are severe. 50

Prophesying The Uprising Of Abdullah Ibn Al-Zubayr

Describing the mentality of Abdullah ibn Al-Zubayr, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

He is wickedly cunning and as stingy as a lizard. He installs snares of religion to hunt worldly pleasures. After all, he will be the crucified man of Quraysh. 51

Prophesying The Uprising Of Al-Mukhtar

When Al-Mukhtar ibn Abi-’Ubaydah Al-Thaqafi prevailed on Al-Kufah and demanded with retaliation for the slaying of Imam Al-Husayn (‘a), ‘Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad led a great army from Syria to fight against him. However, an army led by Ibrahim ibn Al-Ashtar encountered ‘Ubaydullah’s army, shouting, ‘Revenge for Al-Husayn!’ The army then had to retreat.

Abdullah ibn Yasar ibn Abi-'Uqayb Al-Du'ali declared, 'My dear friend, Ali ibn Abi Talib, foretold me that we should encounter the Syrian on the bank of a river called Al-Khazar. They would first make us retreat and we would think of unavoidable defeat. However, we should attack them and kill their commander.'

At that night, 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad was killed and his army fled.

One day, Imam Zayn Al-'Abidin ('a) was asked, 'The Leader of the Believers, Imam Ali ('a), foretold something about Al-Mukhtar, but he did not foretell when and whom he would kill.'

Imam Zayn Al-'Abidin ('a) answered,

'Truthful were the words of the Leader of the Believers. May I tell you when that will take place? It will take place three years from now and the heads of 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad and Shimr ibn Dhi'l-Jawshan, may curse of Allah be upon both of them, shall be brought on so-and-so. We will eat while the heads shall be in front of us and we shall look at them.' 52

Prophesying The Collapse Of The Umayyad Dynasty

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

I swear by Allah that very soon, O descendants of Umayyah, you will see your rule at the hands of other people and you will see it move to the house of your enemies. 53

Prophesying The Power Of The 'Abbasid Dynasty

Imam Ali ('a) foretold Abdullah ibn 'Abbas that his descendants, the 'Abbasid dynasty, should be the rulers for a long period.

One day, Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas came to Imam Ali (‘a) carrying his newborn whom he had named Ali for seeking blessings by this name. Imam Ali (‘a) carried the newborn and then said to the father,

Take him, O father of the kings! 54

On another occasion, Imam Ali (‘a) said to Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas,

When the monarchy of the descendants of Umayyah collapses, your descendants will be the first descendants of Hashim to rule. However, they will commit horrible things. 55

Prophesying The Death Of Mu’awiyah

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

The son of Hind will not die until a cross will be hanged to his neck. 56

Prophesying The Birth Of Imam Zayn Al-’Abidin

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said to his son Imam Al-Husayn (‘a),

You will have a male baby who shall be the best of all the inhabitants of the earth. 57

Prophesying Imam Al-Riza’s Martyrdom

Al-Nu’man ibn Sa’d reported Imam Ali (‘a) as saying,

A man from my descendants will be poisoned to death wrongfully in the land of Khurasan. He will be my namesake and his father the namesake of Moses the son of 'Imran. Behold! Whoever visits him (i.e. his tomb) in his strange land, Allah the Almighty and All-majestic will forgive all of his sins f the past and the coming. 58

Prophesying The Establishing Of Baghdad City

Imam Ali ('a) once passed by a land and asked about its name. 'It is called Baghdad,' he was told. He thus said,

On this very land, a city will be built. 59

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said to Al-Hasan ibn Dhakwan,

You will live a very long lifetime and you will be carried to a city, which will be built by a man from the descendants of my uncle Al-'Abbas, called Baghdad. However, you will not reach the city; rather, you will die in a region called Al-Mada'in. 60

Prophesying The Manners Of The 'Abbasid Rulers

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said,

This community will face woe at the hands of their rulers the cursed tree that your Lord the All-exalted has mentioned (in the Quran). 61

The beginning of them is green but the end of them is haggard. After them, the rule over the community of Muhammad (S) will be run by men: the first of them will be the most clement of them, 62 *the second the most annihilating,* 63 *the fifth the most stable,* 64 *the seventh the most knowledgeable,* 65 *the tenth the most faithless and he will be killed by the closest person to him,* 66 *the fifteenth the busiest and the least wealthy,*

67 *the sixteenth the most faithful and the most respecting for family relation ties.* 68 *I see coming that the feet of the eighteenth of them will be submerged in blood after his soldiers will assassinate him.* 69 *After him, three of his sons will rule and all of them will rule wrongfully and will lead to deviation.* 70 *The twenty-second of them will be the aged man whose lifetime will be long and whose conduct will be accepted by the subjects.* 71 *The rule of the twenty-sixth of them will run away from him like the running away of an ostrich and he will be supported by foolish and nonsensical people. I see coming that he will be killed on a bridge in Al- Zawra'.* 72

'This is due to what your two hands have sent before; and because Allah is not in the least unjust to the servants. (22:10)' 73

Prophesying The Uprising Of The Negroes

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said to Al-Ahnaf,

O Ahnaf, I see coming that he (i.e. the chief of the Negroes) is advancing with an army, which has neither dust nor noise, nor rustling of reins, nor neighing of horses. They are trampling the ground with their feet as if they are the feet of ostriches.

Woe to you (the people of Al-Basrah's) inhabited streets and decorated houses which possess wings like the wings of vultures and trunks like the trunks of elephants; they are the people from among whom if one is killed, he is not mourned, and if one is lost, he is not searched for. I turn this world over on its face, value it only according to its low value, and look at it with an eye suitable to it. 74

Prophesying The Rule Of The Buyid Dynasty

About the rule of the Buyid Dynasty, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

From Daylaman, 75 the sons of the fisherman 76 will appear and their power will spread so widely that they will hold sway over Al-Zawra' and dethrone the caliphs’ They will rule one hundred years or little more’ Among them is the luxurious, the son of the hand-maimed person; he will be killed by his cousin on River Tigris. 77

Prophesying The Magharibah State

Imam Ali (‘a) predicted the establishment of a government ruled by some descendants of him in Morocco, the western part of the Arab homeland under the leadership of Abdullah Al-Mahdi, the first king of the Magharibah dynasty, about whom Imam Ali (‘a) said,

Then, the owner of Kairouan, the fresh, the white-skinned, the descendant of the pure lineage, the well-chosen from the progeny of the one about whom Allah re-decided 78 and whose father shrouded with his own garment.

Prophesying The Uprising Of Tabaristan

Imam Ali (‘a) prophesied that some descendants of the Holy Prophet (S) would lead an uprising in tabaristan (now Mazandara, northern Iran), saying,

In talaqan, there is a treasure for Muhammad’s Household. Allah shall make it apparent when He wills. The callers to it are rightful; they rise by the will of Allah and invite to the (true) religion of Allah. 79

Prophesying The Rule Of The Qarmatians

About the misleading and deviant sect of the Qarmatians (qaramitah), Imam

Ali (‘a) said,

They shall pretend to bear love and affection towards us ostensibly, but they harbor animosity and rancor towards us in their inner selves. The sign of this (animosity) is that they shall kill our heirs and abandon our practical course. 80

Prophesying The Raids Of The Mongols

Describing the Mongols, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

I see coming a people whose faces are like shields covered with rough-scraped skins. They dress themselves in silken and woolen clothes and hold dear excellent horses. Their killing and bloodshed shall take place freely until the wounded shall walk over the dead and the number of runners-away shall be less than those taken prisoner. 81

One of the companions stood up and said, ‘O Leader of the Believers, you have been given knowledge of hidden things.’

Imam Ali (‘a) smiled and said,

O brother of the tribe of Kalb, this is not knowledge of hidden things other, these matters have been acquired from him (namely, the Holy Prophet) who knew them. As regard knowledge of hidden things, that means knowledge of the Day of Judgment, and the things covered by Allah in the verse:

‘Surely, Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the hour; and He sends down the rain; and He knows what is in the wombs; and no one knows what he shall earn on the morrow; and no one knows in what land he shall die. Surely, Allah is Knowing, Aware. (31:34)’

Therefore, Allah alone knows what is there in the wombs, whether male or female, ugly or handsome, generous or miserly, mischievous or pious, and who will be the fuel for Hell and who will be in the company of the prophets in Paradise. This is the knowledge of the hidden things, which is not known to anyone save Allah. All else is that whose knowledge Allah passed on to His Prophet and he passed it on to me, and prayed for me that my bosom may retain it and my ribs may hold it. 82

Prophesying The Imminent Seditions

Imam Ali ('a), foretelling his companions about the imminent calamities and misfortunes that they would have to face, said,

Certainly, a time will come upon you after me when nothing will be more concealed than the truth, nothing more apparent than falsity, and nothing more current than forging lies against Allah and His Prophet.

For the people of this period, nothing will be more valueless than the Quran being recited as it ought to be recited, nor anything more valuable than the Quran being misplaced from its position, and in the towns, nothing will be more hated than virtue, nor anything more acceptable than vice.

The holders of the Book will throw it away and its memorizers will forget it. In these days, the Quran and its people will be exiled and expelled. They will be companions keeping together on one path, but no one will offer them asylum.

Consequently, at this time, the Quran and its people will be among the people but not among them, will be with them but not with them, because misguidance cannot accord with guidance even though they may be together.

The people will have united on division and will therefore have cut away from the community, as though they were the leaders of the Quran and not the Quran their leader. Nothing of it will be left with them except its name, and they will know nothing save its writing and its words. Before

that, they will inflict hardships on the virtuous, naming the latter's truthful views about Allah false allegations, and enforcing for virtues the punishment of the vice. 83

All these prophecies came true after the passing away of Imam Ali ('a). When Mu'awiyah came to power followed by the descendants of Marwan, they spared no efforts in fighting against Islam and oppressing and slaying the true guardians of the religion. The laws of the Quran were thus suspended, vice and wickedness were spread deliberately, falsity and fabrications were the major job of people, and all people hurried towards sinning and committing the most hideous indecencies.

Describing this manner, Imam Ali ('a) says,

They took to the right and the left piercing through to the ways of evil and leaving the paths of true guidance. Do not make haste for a matter which is to happen and is awaited, and do not wish for delay in what the morrow is to bring for you.

For, too many are the people who make haste for a matter, but when they get it, they begin to wish they had not got it. How near today is to the dawning of tomorrow! O my people, this is the time for the occurrence of every promised event and the approach of things which you do not know. Behold! Whoever from among us catches them during these days, will move through them with a burning lamp and will tread on the footsteps of the virtuous, in order to unfasten knots, to free slaves, to divide the united, and to unite the divided.

He will be in concealment from people. The stalker will not find his footprints even though he pursues with his eye. Then, a group of people will be sharpened like the sharpening of swords by the blacksmith. Their sight will be brightened by revelation, the delicacies of commentary will be put in their ears, and they will be given drinks of wisdom, morning and evening.

Their period became long in order that they might complete their position of disgrace and deserve vicissitudes, until the end of the period was

reached, and a group of people turned towards mischief and picked up their arms for fighting.

The virtuous did not show any obligation to Allah, but calmly endured, and did not feel elated for having engaged themselves in truthfulness. Eventually, the period of trial came to an end according to what was ordained. Then, they propagated their good views among others and sought nearness to Allah according to the command of their leader. 84

When Allah took the Prophet to Himself, a group of men went back on their tracks. The ways of misguidance ruined them and they placed trust in deceitful intriguers, showed consideration to other than kinsmen, abandoned the kin whom they had been ordered to love, shifted the building from its strong foundation, and built it in other than its proper place.

They are the source of every shortcoming and the door of gropers in the dark. They were moving to and fro in amazement and lay intoxicated in the way of the people of the Pharaohs. They were either bent on this world and taking support on it or away from the faith and removed from it. 85

Prophesying The Events Of The Last Of Time

On many occasions, Imam Ali ('a) talked about some future events and, on other occasions, described the general manners of the people who would live in the last age of the earth. Let us now refer to some of these discourses.

(1) Imam Ali ('a), predicting that humanity would be in wear and tear because of abandoning the courses of redemption and true guidance, said,

Shortly, a time will come for people when high positions will be given only to those who defame others, when vicious people will be regarded as witty, and the just will be regarded as weak.

People will regard charity as a loss, consideration for kinship as an obligation to be thanked, and worship grounds for claiming greatness among others. At this time, authority will be exercised through the counsel of women, the posting of young boys in high positions, and the running of the administration by eunuchs. 86

(2) Imam Ali ('a) says,

A time will come when nothing will remain of the Quran except its writing, and nothing of Islam except its name. The mosques in those days will be busy with regards to construction but desolate with regard to guidance.

Those staying in them and those visiting them will be the worst of all on earth. From them, mischief will spring up, and towards them, all wrong will turn. If anyone isolates himself from it (i.e. mischief), they will fling him back to it, and if anyone steps back from it, they will push him towards it. 87

(3) On another occasion, Imam Ali ('a) said,

A severe time will come upon the people wherein the rich will seize their possessions with their teeth by way of miserliness although they have not been commanded to do so. Allah the Glorified says,

'Forget not generosity among yourselves. (2:237)'

During this time, the wicked will rise up while the virtuous will remain low, and purchases will be made from the helpless although the Prophet, peace be upon him and his descendants, has prohibited purchasing from the helpless. 88

- 1. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 10:117.
- 2. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 10:121.
- 3. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:286.
- 4. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 10:128.
- 5. Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab 3:39.
- 6. Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi, Hayat Al-Imam Al-Hasan, pp. 573.

- 7. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq'at Siffin, pp. 158.
- 8. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq'at Siffin, pp. 157.
- 9. Tarikh Ibn 'Asakir 13:57-8; Al-tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir 3:106.
- 10. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq'at Siffin, pp. 158.
- 11. Nur Al-Din Al-Haythami, Majma' Al-Zawa'id wa Manba' Al-Fawa'id 9:190; Al-tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir 3:110, No. 2823. The people of Al-Kufah, during the reign of Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah, had sent thousands of letters to Imam Al-Husayn ('a) informing him that they were ready to support him in his rising against the tyrannical ruler and asking him to save them from the Umayyad dynasty.

  However, when the Imam ('a) responded to them and came to their country, they rallied one another against him and killed him along with the descendants of the Holy Prophet (S), including the Imam's sons, brothers, and cousins in addition to the most prominent personalities of Islam.

  They then trampled his body, cut off his head, and carried it on spearheads as gift to the tyrant 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad, the governor of Al-Kufah, and then to Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah in Damascus.

- 12. Al-Haythami, Majma' Al-Zawa'id 9:190; Al-tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir 3:118, No. 2825.
- 13. Al-Haythami, Majma' Al-Zawa'id 9:190; Al-tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir 3:117, No. 2824.
- 14. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:286.
- 15. Ja'far ibn Qawlawayh Al-Qummi, Kamil Al-Ziyarat, pp. 74.
- 16. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 10:14.
  Husayn the son of Tamim ibn Usamah was still child when Imam Ali ('a) foretold his future. When he grew up, he became the leader of 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad's police forces. 'Ubaydullah chose him to carry an oral message to 'Umar ibn Sa'd, ordering him to fight against Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and

threatening him with punishment if he would refuse. Because of this message, ‘Umar ibn Sa’d led the army that killed Imam Al-Husayn (‘a).

- 17. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 10:14.
  When Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) was martyred, Al-Bara' ibn ‘Azib remembered Imam Ali’s foretelling and regretted that very much. He thus said, ‘How great my regret is! I did not present myself with Al-Husayn to win the honor of martyrdom in defense of him
- 18. Musnad Al-Imam Zayd, pp. 47.
  The Umayyad ruling authorities and their fans exerted all possible efforts to efface the tomb of Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) and extinguish his immortal uprising. However, when their dynasty collapsed and they became rotten, the holy tomb of Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) appeared as the most precious mausoleum in the world that is visited ceaselessly by people from all countries of the world. Only the happy can have the honor of visiting this holy tomb, which has become the epitome of human integrity and the guide to self-sacrifice for the truth and honor. Peace of Allah be upon Al-Husayn, his sons, and his companions whom were martyred in defense of him
- 19. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:328.
- 20. Baqir Sharif Al-Qarashi, Hayat Al-Imam Al-Hasan 2:378.
  After Imam Ali (‘a) was martyred and Mu’awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan came to power, he ordered his constables and agents to arrest ‘Amr ibn Al-kamq. When ‘Amr knew about that, he hid himself in the quarter of his folks Banu-Khuza’ah. However, they gave him up to the constables of Mu’awiyah who executed him. They then beheaded him and took his head as present to Mu’awiyah in Syria.
- 21. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 34:302.
- 22. Shaykh Al-Mufid, Al-Ikhtisas, pp. 77.
  Rashid Al-kajari was brought before Ziyad ibn Abih, the deputy governor of Al-Kufah during the reign of Mu’awiyah, who asked him, ‘What did your friend (i.e. Ali ibn Abi- talib) say to you about the way of your death? We will kill you as same as he told you.’

Rashid answered, 'He said to me that you would cut off my hands and my legs and then crucify me.'

Ziyad declared, 'By Allah, I will make his word false.' He thus ordered the constables to free Rashid.

When he was about to leave, Ziyad said, 'By God, we do not find anything wrong with what his leader had told him. Therefore, cut off his hands and legs and crucify him.'

'Wait a moment,' Rashid said to him, 'I still have something to tell you which the Leader of the Believers told me.'

'Cut out his tongue,' ordered Ziyad.

'This, by God, is the verification of the words of the Leader of the Believers,' declared Rashid.

- 23. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:219. During the reign of Mu'awiyah, Ziyad ibn Abih summoned Juwayriyyah, cut off his hand and leg and crucified him on tree trunk.
- 24. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:294. During Mu'awiyah's reign, Ziyad arrested Mazra', killed him, and crucified his body between two of the mosque's terraces.
- 25. Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 24:290. During the reign of Mu'awiyah, kujr ibn 'Adi was arrested. He was asked to reject Imam Ali ('a), but he refused to do. Therefore, he was put to death.
- 26. Al-Hashimi, Kumayl ibn Ziyad Al-Nakha'i, pp. 90.
- 27. Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat Al-Sahabah 4:34.
- 28. Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat Al-Sahabah 4:34.
- 29. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 1:529.
- 30. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 51:112.
- 31. The Black Stone in a stone built into the eastern wall of the Holy Ka'bah. It is an object of veneration and it now consists of three large pieces and some fragments, surrounded by a stone ring and held together with a silver band. It is reported that the Black Stone was descended from Paradise and it was

white, but it turned black because it absorbed the sins of the human beings. In AD 930, it was carried away by the fanatics of the Qaramitah sect and held for ransom for about 20 years later.

- 32. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 10:14.
- 33. Minhaj Al-Bara'ah fi Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 7:83.
- 34. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 7:217.
- 35. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 7:48.
- 36. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 51:110.
- 37. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 51:110.
- 38. Al-Salami, 'Aqd Al-Durar, pp. 182.
- 39. Hayat Al-Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi, pp. 183.
- 40. Al-Qanaduzi, Yanabi' Al-Mawaddah, pp. 416.
- 41. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 51:118.
- 42. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:289.
  Isma'il ibn Raja', a reporter, said, 'With my own eyes, I saw A'sha Bahilah within the captives of the army of Abd Al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Al-Ash'ath that had revolted against Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf Al-Thaqafi (the boy of Thaqif). After words of reproach and rebuke, Al-Hajjaj ordered his headsman to behead A'sha Bahilah.'
- 43. Historicists reported that Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf Al-Thaqafi was killed due to a sting of a beetle.
- 44. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 116.
- 45. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 6:146.
  Marwan ibn Al-Hakam came to power after the abdication of Mu'awiyah ibn Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah. His four sons, Abd Al-Malik, Al-Walid, Sulayman, and Yazid, came to power successively after him. During their reigns, people suffered the most unbearable misfortunes because of their oppressions and persecutions.
- 46. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 57.
- 47. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 93.
- 48. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 98.
- 49. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:268.
- 50. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 137. Abd Al-Malik ibn Marwan came to power in Syria after his father Marwan ibn

Al-kakam and then after the killing of Al-Mukhtar ibn Abi-'Ubayd Al-Thaqafi in his encounter with Mu•'ab ibn Al-Zubayr, he proceeded towards Iraq. He clashed with Mus'ab's forces at a region called Maskin near Dayr Al-Jathaliq in the outskirts of Al-Kufah.

After defeating him, he made a victorious entry into Al-Kufah and took allegiance from its inhabitants. Then, he sent Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf Al-Thaqafi to Makkah to fight against Abdullah ibn Al-Zubayr. Consequently, this man besieged Makkah and stoned it, and shed the blood of thousands of innocent persons like water. He killed Abdullah ibn Al-Zubayr and hung his body on the gallows. He perpetrated such atrocities on the people that one shudders at the thought of them.

- 51. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Al-Thaqafi, Al-Gharat 2:679.
- 52. Tafsir Al-Imam Al-'Askari, pp. 552.
- 53. Minhaj Al-Bara'ah fi Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 7:216.
- 54. Al-Mubarrad, Al-Kamil 2:217.
  On the last days of his wicked lifetime, Mu'awiyah was attacked by many diseases. He consulted a Christian physician who suggested that he would hang to his neck a cross. Mu'awiyah thus died while the cross was hanged to his neck. (Abu Hanifah, Al-Manaqib wa'l-Mathalib ñ a manuscript)
- 55. Ibn Shadhan, Fada'il Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 141.
- 56. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:305.
- 57. Further details can be seen in the author's two-volume book entitled Hayat Al-Imam Zayn Al-'Abidin.
- 58. Shaykh Al-Saduq, 'Uyun Akhbar Al-Ridha 2:258.
- 59. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib1:422.
- 60. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:307.
- 61. This is an indication of the Umayyad dynasty; the tree accursed by the Holy Quran.
- 62. Abu'l-'Abbas Al-Saffah, the first 'Abbasid ruler, was the least hardhearted to the descendants of Imam Ali ('a).
- 63. Abu-Ja'far Al-Mansur, the second 'Abbasid ruler, was the most lethal, the most courageous, and the most cunning. He

killed great numbers of people through trickeries and cunning schemes

- 64. The reign of Harun Al-Rashid, the fifth ‘Abbasid ruler, is considered the golden reign of the ‘Abbasid dynasty, because it was characterized by political stability.
- 65. Al-Ma'mun, the seventh ‘Abbasid ruler, was the most knowledgeable of all those who ruled during the era of the ‘Abbasid dynasty. He was well-known for intelligence and attentive inclination towards sciences.
- 66. The tenth of the ‘Abbasid rulers, Al-Mutawakkil, was the most faithless. He was the most antagonistic and aggressive towards the Holy Prophet’ descendants and their devotees. He was killed at the hands of his private slaves.
- 67. The fifteenth ‘Abbasid ruler, Al-Mu’tamid ruled for twenty-three years during which he was engaged in internal and external wars
- 68. It is reported that Al-Mu’tasid bi’llah, the sixteenth ‘Abbasid ruler, saw in dream that a man came to the River Tigris, extended his hand to the water of the river, and the water was gathered in his hand. He then opened his hand and the water flew. The man asked Al- Mu’tasid, ‘Do you know who I am?’ ‘No, I do not,’ answered Al-Mu’tasid. The man said, ‘I am Ali ibn Abi Talib. When you sit on the seat of caliphate, treat my descendants kindly.’ Hence, when he became the caliph, Al-Mu’tasid was kind and loving to the descendants of Imam Ali (‘a). For this reason, the Imam (‘a) described him as faithful and respecting for family relation ties.
- 69. Al-Muqtadir bi’llah, the eighteenth ‘Abbasid ruler, was killed in a battle led by Munis who had occupied Al-Mawsil (Mosul), lead an army, and returned to Baghdad to fight against the caliph.
- 70. The three sons of Al-Muqtadir bi’llah; namely, Al-Radhi bi’llah, Al-Muttaqi bi’llah, and Al-Muti’ lillah, ruled respectively after their father.
- 71. The ‘Abbasid ruler who lived a long lifetime was either Al-Qadir bi’llah who lived for eighty-six years and ruled for forty-one years, or Al-Qa'im bi-Amrillah who lived for sev-

enty-six years and ruled for forty-four years. However, these were the twenty-fifth and the twenty-sixth rulers of the ‘Abbasid dynasty, but not the twenty-second. It is probable that historicists or narrators of the tradition have made a mistake, confusing between twenty-second and twenty-fifth or twenty-sixth. It is also probable that Imam Ali (‘a) did not consider the reigns of Al-Qahir bi’llah, Al-Radhi bi’llah, Al-Muqtadir bi’llah, and Al-Muktafi bi’llah, because they ruled very short times and the reigns of them were confused with one another.

- 72. It is probable that the twenty-sixth ‘Abbasid ruler is Al-Rashid bi’llah who ran away under the protection of ‘Imad Al-Din Al-Zinji and he was then killed by a warrior in Isfahan. It is also probable that the twenty-sixth ‘Abbasid ruler is Al-Musta’sim, the last of them, because he was killed as well.
- 73. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:322.
- 74. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 127.
  The Chief of the Negroes claimed to be a descendant of the Holy Prophet (S) by showing himself as Ali the son of Muhammad the son of Ahmad the son of ‘´sa the son of Zayd the son of Ali the son of Al-Husayn the son of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib. He was born in the village of Warzanin in the suburbs of Ray (southern Tehran) and belonged to the Azariqah sect of the Khawarij. However, experts on lineage and biographers have not accepted his claim to being a Sayyid (i.e. descendant of the Holy Prophet) and have given his father’s name as Muhammad ibn Abd Al-Rahim instead of Muhammad ibn Ahmad. The former was from the tribe of Abd Al-Qays and had been born of a maid-slave from Sind. Ali ibn Muhammad rose as an insurgent in AH 255 in the reign of Al-Muhtadi bi’llah, the ‘Abbasid ruler, and associated with him the people from the suburbs of Al-Basrah under promise of money, wealth, and freedom. He entered Al-Basrah on the 17th of Shawwal, AH 255 killing and looting, and in only two days, he put to death thirty thousand individuals; men, women, and children, and displayed extreme oppression, bloodshed, savageness, and ferocity.

He dismantled houses, burnt mosques, and after continuous killing and devastation for fourteen years, was killed in the month of Safar, AH 270 in the reign of Al-Muwaffaq bi'llah. Then, people got rid of his devastating deeds. Imam Ali's prophecy is one of those prophecies which throw light on his knowledge of the unknown. The details of his army given by Imam Ali; namely, that there would be neither neighing of horses nor rustling of weapons therein, is a historical fact. The historian Al-Tabari has written that when this man reached near Al-Karkh (a sector of Baghdad) with the intention of insurrection, the people of that place welcomed him, and a man presented him a horse for which no rein could be found despite a search. At last, he rode it using a rope for the rein. Similarly, there were at that time only three swords in his force: one with himself, one with Ali ibn Aban Al-Muhallabi, and one with Muhammad ibn Salm, but later they collected some more weapons by marauding.

- 75. Daylaman, or Daylam, is a city northwest Iran.
- 76. The father of the three kings of the Buyid dynasty was a fisherman. He used to catch fish for a living for his dependants and him.
- 77. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 7:49.
  The luxurious man is 'Izz Al-Dawlah Bakhtiyar the son of Mu'izz Al-Dawlah Abu'l-Husayn whose hand was mutilated because he had absconded a battlefield. 'Izz Al-Dawlah was so luxurious that he had no concern but to amuse himself and drink intoxicants. He was killed by his cousin 'Asud Al-Dawlah FannaKhosrow in the palace of Al-Jass on River Tigris and robbed his monarchy. Mu'izz Al-Dawlah, the Buyid ruler, dethroned Al-Mustakfi, the 'Abbasid caliph, and appointed Al-Muti' li-Amrillah as the caliph.
- 78. Re-deciding of Almighty Allah is known in the Muslim theological terminology as bada'. The meaning of bada' in relation to the affairs of creatures can be defined as arriving at an opinion about an issue while this opinion was not present in the past or, in other words, concluding an idea that was absent until that time.

An example of the natural meaning of bada' (i.e. in relation to all things created) is that the opinion of somebody about a certain act may be changed because he has concluded a result that he has not known before according to which he must change his opinion and idea about that act. Therefore, it looks wise to leave doing that act after learning about the true interest and show regret for the previous opinion. Bada' in this sense is impossible for Almighty Allah, because it is part of ignorance and imperfection two matters that are impossible for Almighty Allah to hold, as is confirmed by the belief of the Imamiyyah Shi'ah Muslims. Laying stress on this faith, the Imamiyyah Shi'ah Muslims adhere to the following rule stated by Imam Ja'far Al- Sadiq ('a):

'Whoever claims that Almighty Allah changes a previous decision (i.e. on the basis of bada') on account of regretting (a previous action) is decided by us as having disbelieved in Allah the All-great.'

He is also reported as saying: 'Indeed, I disavow anyone who claims that Almighty Allah has changed a previous decision about an affair because He has come to know about something that He had not known in the past!' On the other hand, our Holy Imams ('a) are reported to have stated some sayings giving the false impression that bada' in the previous sense might be applicable to Almighty Allah. For instance, Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq ('a) is reported as saying:

'Almighty Allah has not changed a decision about an affair like what He has done in the case of my son Isma'il.'

Because of such traditions, some writers of certain Muslim sects have accused the Imamiyyah Shi'ah Muslims of believing in bada' in the aforesaid sense so as to defame Shi'ism and the School of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). They have added this false claim to the other vituperative campaigns that they lead against the Shi'ah. The fact in this regard is that we, the

Shi'ah, believe in bada' as exactly as it is stated by Almighty Allah in the Holy Quran:

'Allah erases what He pleases and establishes what He pleases, and with Him is the basis of the Book. (13:39)'

Accordingly, the Imam ('a) meant that Almighty Allah's decision in the case of Isma'il, the Imam's son, was unprecedented; so, none of Almighty Allah's other decisions were like it. The Lord took back Isma'il before his father to tell people that Isma'il would not be the Imam after his father, while circumstances led them to believe that Isma'il, Imam Al-Sadiq's eldest son, would be the next Imam. Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) is reported as saying:

'Almighty Allah has not changed a decision about an affair like what He has done in the case of my son Isma'il. He took his life before me so that people would realize that Isma'il would not be the next Imam.' Similar to this meaning of bada' is the abrogation (naskh) of previous religious laws by the new law brought by our Prophet Muhammad (S), and even the abrogation of some laws brought by the Holy Prophet (S) himself.

- 79. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 7:49.When Isma'il the son of Imam Al-Sadiq and from whose lineage Abdullah Al-Mahdi the first king of the Magharibah dynasty came dead during the lifetime of his father, Imam Al- Sadiq ('a) shrouded him with his garment and allowed the most prominent personalities of the Shi'ah of that time to see his face so that they would be sure that he died and he was not the next Imam. Nevertheless, some people (namely, the Isma'iliyyah Muslims) did not believe in the death of Isma'il; rather, they believed that he was still alive and he was only raised to the heavens, just like Jesus Christ ('a).
- 80. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 10:14. The Qarmatians spread mischief, insurgence, robbery, and devastation in the Muslim countries. They violated all the prohibi-

tions of Almighty Allah and prohibited the legal. Just like Communists in ideology, the Qarmatians abandoned the faith of Islam and spread anti-Islamic teachings. They killed a big number of the descendants of Imam Ali (‘a) and declared their hostility towards the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a).

- 81. The Mongols were inhabitants of the Mongolian desert in the north west of Turkistan. These semi-savage tribes lived by marauding, killing, and devastating. They used to fight among themselves and attack neighboring areas. Each tribe had a separate chief who was deemed responsible for their protection. In AH 656, two hundred thousand Tartars marched on Baghdad. Al-Mu’tasim bi’llah’s army and the people of Baghdad jointly faced them, but it was not in their power to stop this torrent of calamity.

  The result was that the Tartars entered Baghdad on the tenth of Muharram (the ‘Ashura' Day) carrying with them blood-shed and ruin. They remained busy killing for forty days. Rivers of blood flowed in the streets and all the alleys were filled with dead bodies. Hundreds of thousands of people were put to the sword while the ‘Abbasid ruler was trampled to death under foot. Only those people who hid themselves in wells or underground places and hid from their sight could survive. This was the devastation of Baghdad which shook the ‘Abbasid Kingdom to its foundation, so that its flag could never fly thereafter.

- 82. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 127.
  To know hidden things on a personal level is one thing, while to be gifted by Allah with knowledge of any matter and to convey it to others is different. The knowledge of the future which the prophets and vicegerents of prophets possess is gained by them through Allah’s teaching and informing. Allah alone has knowledge of events which are to happen in the future. Of course, He passes this knowledge on to whomever He wills. Thus, He says:

'He alone is the Knower of the unseen, neither does He reveal His secrets unto any one else save unto that one of the Messengers whom He chooses. (72:26:27)'

In this way, Imam Ali ('a) also received knowledge of the future through the instructions of the Holy Prophet (S) or inspiration from Allah, for which these words of Imam Ali ('a) stand evidence. Of course, sometimes, it is not proper or expedient to disclose certain matters and they are allowed to remain under a veil. Then, no one can be acquainted with them.

- 83. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 146
- 84. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 102.
- 85. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 150.
- 86. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 102.
- 87. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 379.
- 88. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 477.

Debates Of Imam Ali As

Argumentation and debate have always been the eminent feature of the prophets' invitation to Almighty Allah. They falsified the opinions of their heathen enemies by means of arguments and debates. For instance, Prophet Abraham provided undeniable points of evidence when he was argued by the tyrant of his time. Referring to this argumentation, the Holy Quran recounts:

Bethink you of him who had an argument with Abraham about his Lord, because Allah had given him the kingdom; how, when Abraham said, 'My Lord is He Who gives life and causes death.' He answered, 'I give life and cause death.' Abraham said, 'Lo! Allah causes the sun to rise in the East; so, do you cause it to come up from the West.' Thus was the disbeliever abashed. And Allah guides not wrongdoing folks. (2:258)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) also depended upon dialogue and highly moral argumentation in the process of promulgation

for Islam. In this respect, Almighty Allah has ordered him, saying,

Call unto the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! Your Lord is best aware of him who strays from His way, and He is best Aware of those who go aright. (16:125)

Positively and distinctively, Islam has adopted the method of debate and argumentation in the promulgation for its message and has not used any means of violence in order to achieve its goals. Obviously, the Holy Quran has declared,

There is no compulsion in religion. (2:256)

All the wars that were entered against the enemies of Islam were completely defensive and were aimed at protecting the values, principles, and goals of Islam that the polytheistic powers of Quraysh and their aides had exerted all efforts to eradicate and screen them from the human community.

Imam Ali (‘a) always followed the course of the Holy Prophet (S), since he was the most attached to him, the door to his city of knowledge, and the closest to him. The Imam (‘a) thus patterned after the Holy Prophet (S) in all of his practices; he relied objectively upon debate and argumentation against his rivals. He only waged wars against them after all other means of peace had run out.

Besides, Imam Ali (‘a) was the most broad-minded and the most conversant with the various fields of knowledge. For instance, none could ever beat him in the field of theology and divinity. He confuted the scholars and doctors of other religions through his debates and arguments.

Because the caliphs who seized power before him did not have any logic for challenging the Divine and Prophetic orders of appointing Imam Ali (‘a) as the next leader of the Muslim community, they could not defend themselves when the Imam (‘a) pro-

vided overwhelming points of evidence proving the violation they had committed when they plotted the conspiracy of usurping the position of leadership from him.

Likewise, Imam Ali (‘a) had full acquaintance with the points of weakness in the other religions; he therefore presented these points before the scholars of these religions who had come to dispute with him about the authenticity of Islam.

In the following lines, we will present a little number of the debates and arguments of Imam Ali (‘a) against his rivals.

Debates With The Christians

After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S) and the coming to power of Abu-Bakr, a group of Christians, headed by the Catholic (jathaliq), visited Al- Madinah and met the new caliph.

The Catholic asked, ‘In the Gospel, we have read about a messenger who would come after Jesus. When we were informed that Muhammad ibn Abdullah had claimed being the messenger involved, we hurried to our king to find us a solution. He summoned the prominent personalities of our people and sent us to your city so that we would seek the truth. However, we missed meeting with your prophet Muhammad.

We have read in our books that prophets would not depart from this world before appointing successors to represent them among their people and to give answers to all questions posed. O leader, are you the successor of Muhammad so that we will ask you questions whose answers are needed by us?’

‘Umar intruded, pointed to Abu-Bakr, and said, ‘Yes, this man is the successor of Allah’s Messenger. You may ask him.’

The Catholic asked, ‘Can you tell us about the superiority of you in religion? We are here basically to ask this question.’

Abu-Bakr answered, 'We are believers and you are nonbelievers. A believer is definitely better than a nonbeliever. Likewise, belief is better than unbelief.'

The Catholic said, 'Your claim requires evidence. Can you tell me whether you are believer in the sight of Allah or in the sight of yourself?'

Abu-Bakr answered, 'I am believer in the sight of myself, because I do not know what Allah thinks about me.'

The Catholic asked, 'Now, am I nonbeliever in your sight as same as you are believer in your sight, or I am nonbeliever in the sight of Allah?'

Abu-Bakr answered, 'You are nonbeliever in my sight, because I do not know what Allah thinks about you.'

The Catholic said, 'I believe indisputably that you doubt yourself and me!

Can you tell me whether you do or do not enjoy a certain rank in Paradise that you know on the strength of the faith you are following?'

Abu-Bakr answered, 'I do have a rank in Paradise that I know due to the promise. However, I do not know whether I can or cannot reach it.'

The Catholic asked, 'Do you expect that I will have such a rank in Paradise?'

Abu-Bakr answered, 'Yes, I expect so.'

The Catholic said, 'I believe indisputably that you expect for me such a rank but you fear lest you yourself will not have it. Now, can you tell me whether you have familiarity with the entire knowledge of the Prophet?'

Abu-Bakr answered, 'No, I do not. Yet, I know the items of knowledge that the Prophet transmitted to me.'

The Catholic asked, 'How should you be the Prophet's successor when you are not familiar with the Prophet's knowledge that is needed by his community?'

The questions of the Catholic annoyed 'Umar who considered them transgression against Abu-Bakr. He therefore shouted at the Catholic.

Hurriedly, Salman went to Imam Ali ('a) and informed him of the situation. The Imam ('a) came to the mosque and said to the Catholic,

O Christian, you may ask me whatever you need to ask. I swear by the One Who split the grain and fashioned the souls; I will answer whatever you ask me, out of the knowledge that I have received from the Prophet of true guidance, Muhammad (S).

So, the Catholic asked, 'Can you tell me whether you are believer in the sight of Allah or in the sight of yourself?''

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

I am believer in the sight of Allah as same as I am believer in my own faith.

The Catholic, admired by the Imam's answer, said, 'Well, this is the answer of one who has full confidence in his faith. Now, tell me what rank you will have in Paradise.'

The Imam ('a) answered,

My rank will be the same rank of the Prophet of Makkah in the highest place of Paradise. I never doubt so and I never suspect any promise that is made to me by my Lord.

The Catholic asked, 'On which strength have you recognized the rank you have just mentioned?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

I recognize it on the strength of the revealed Book and the truthfulness of the Divinely-sent Prophet.

The Catholic further asked, 'How can you be so sure of the truthfulness of your prophet?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

I have known his truthfulness through the amazing signs and the clear-cut miracles.

Confirming the Imam's words, the Catholic said, 'Yes, it is. This is the way to true argument for those who engage themselves in debates. Now, tell me where Allah is today.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

Allah the All-exalted is too majestic to have a certain place and too elevated to have a certain space. He is always as He is and He existed when there was no place. Today, He is as same as He was, because He never changes from one condition to another.

The Catholic said, 'Well done, young man. You have briefed the answer to the point. Now, tell me about Allah the All-exalted; can He be realized by tangible matters so that one who seeks to know Him can realize him by means of tangibles? Or, if not, what is the way to recognize Him?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

Allah the King and the Omnipotent is too exalted to be described by an amount or to be realized by tangible things or to be compared to human beings. The only way to recognize Him is to consider His makings that

dazzle the intellects and lead the people of good reason to Him through His creations that are witnessed and reasoned.

The Catholic said, 'You have said the truth. By Allah, this is the very truth that those who are straying off in ignorance have missed. Now, tell me what your prophet has said about the Christ when he informed you that Jesus is a creature and not god. How could your prophet prove that Jesus was created and how could he deny Jesus' godhead?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

Jesus is proven as a created being because he could not dispense with programming, he had a certain feature, he always changed from one condition to another, and he was always exposed to increase or decrease.

On the other hand, I do not deny that he was a prophet and I do not claim that he was out of infallibility and (human) perfection. Allah the All- exalted has informed us that Jesus was just like Adam: Allah created him from dust and then said to him, 'Be!' So, he was. [1]

The Questions Of A Monk

A group of Christians came to Al-Madinah from Rome to recognize the leader of the Muslims after the Holy Prophet (S). Headed by a monk, the group entered the Prophet's Mosque where Abu-Bakr, surrounded by a group of the Muhajirun and the Ansar, sat. The monk advanced and asked Abu-Bakr, 'What is your name?'

Abu-Bakr answered, 'My name is 'Atiq.'

The monk asked, 'Do you have another name?'

Abu-Bakr answered, 'My other name is Al-Siddiq.'

The monk asked, 'Do you have another name than these two?'

Abu-Bakr answered, 'No, I do not.'

The monk expressed, 'You are not the one I am looking for.'

Abu-Bakr now asked, 'What for have you come?'

The monk answered, 'I have come from Rome carrying with me a casket of gold to pose some questions to the successor of the prophet of this community. If he answers me, I will convert to Islam and distribute the gold among you; otherwise, I will return home carrying my gold with me and keeping my faith.'

Abu-Bakr expressed, 'You may put any question you want.'

The monk said, 'By Allah, I will not start any discussion with you before you grant me immunity against your companions' and your assault.'

Abu-Bakr said, 'You are safe and you can say anything you want to say without facing any trouble.'

The monk thus asked, 'What is the thing that is not possessed by Allah, the thing that is not from Allah, and the thing that Allah does not know?'

Abu-Bakr was too perplexed to find an answer; therefore, the monk posed the same question to the companions none of whom could answer.

Salman ran to Imam Ali ('a) and informed him about the question, and the

Imam ('a), accompanying Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, hurried to the mosque.

Once the Imam ('a) arrived in there, Abu-Bakr asked the monk to pose his question to Imam Ali ('a).

The monk thus asked, 'O young man, what is your name?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

For the Jews, my name is Eli; for the Christians, it is Elijah; for my father, it is Ali, and for my mother, it is Haydarah.

The monk asked, 'What is your position to your prophet?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

He is my brother, father-in-law, and cousin.

The monk said, 'By the Lord of Jesus, you are the very one I am asking about. Can you tell what the thing that is not possessed by Allah is, what the thing that is not from Allah is, and what the thing that is not known by Allah is?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

The thing that is not possessed by Allah is that Allah the All-exalted does not have a wife and a son.

The thing that is not from Allah is that Allah does not have any oppression towards His creatures.

The thing that is not known by Allah is that Allah does not know any thing or any one to be His partner in His Kingdom.

Immediately, the monk converted to Islam. He kissed Imam Ali ('a) and declared the profession of Islam, saying, 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and you are the true vicegerent (of the Prophet), the trustee of this community, and the essence of the true religion and wisdom.'

The monk gave the gold he had with him to the Imam ('a) and the Imam ('a) did not leave his place before distributing the entire gold among the poor people.2

The Bishop Of Najran

The archbishop of Najran came to ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab to pay the tribute. When ‘Umar invited the archbishop to Islam, he nodded his head and could not find any answer to say.

Immediately, Imam Ali (‘a) entered and everybody received him warmly. He (‘a) then had the following debate with the bishop:

The bishop asked, ‘You, Muslims, claim that Paradise is as wide as the heavens and the earth. If so, then where will Hellfire be?’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

‘If night falls, where does daylight go?’

The bishop knew for sure that Imam Ali (‘a) had so much knowledge, but he asked his permission to pose a question to ‘Umar. As the Imam (‘a) permitted him, the bishop asked, ‘O ‘Umar can tell me about the land that was covered by sunlight one time only?’

‘Umar failed to answer; he therefore asked Imam Ali (‘a) to answer this question on behalf of him.

The Imam (‘a) thus said,

This land is the bottom of the sea that Allah the All-exalted split for Moses so that his soldiers and he could cross from it. At the hour of their crossing, the land was covered by sunlight for once only, but it did not see sunlight neither before nor after that hour, because the sea then was closed on Pharaoh and his soldiers.

The bishop said, ‘This is true. Now, can you tell me about a thing that is within reach of the inhabitants of this world, but whatever people take from it, it neither decreases nor increases?’

The Imam (‘a) answered,

It is the Holy Quran and the sciences.

The bishop said, 'This is true. Now, can you tell me about the first messenger that Allah sent while it was neither human being nor jinn?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

This is the crow that Allah sent immediately after Cain had killed his brother Abel (the two sons of Adam). So, Cain was so confused because he did not know what to do with the body of his brother. At that time, Allah sent a crow digging in the ground to show Cain how he should cover his brother's naked corpse.

The bishop said, 'This is true. I have only one question, but I want 'Umar to answer it: Where is Allah?'

As 'Umar became angry, Imam Ali ('a) said to him,

O Abu-kafs, do not be angry; lest the bishop will believe that you have failed to answer his question.

Hence, 'Umar asked Imam Ali ('a) to answer the question and the Imam ('a) said,

One day, I was in the presence of Allah's Messenger (S) when an angel came and greeted him. The Holy Prophet (S), having responded to the angel's greeting, asked: 'Where have you just been?'

The angel replied, 'I was with my Lord above the seven skies.' Then, another angel came and the Holy Prophet (S) asked him the same question. The angel answered, 'I was with my Lord at the place of the rising of the sun.' A third angel came and the Holy Prophet (S) asked him the same question. The angel answered, 'I was with my Lord at the place of the setting of the sun.'

Allah the All-exalted is never empty of any place and is never occupying a certain place at any moment. He is neither in a thing, nor over a thing, nor within a thing. His authority includes the heavens and the earth. There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing.

Not an atom's weight, or less than that, or greater, escapes Him in the heavens or in the earth. He knows all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. There is no secret conference of three but He is their fourth, nor of five but He is their sixth, nor of less than that or more but He is with them wherever they may be. 3

Questions Of The Roman Emperor

A heated argument took place between Al-karith ibn Sinan Al-Azdi and a man from the Ansar. When their case was provided before 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, he did not judge fairly. As a result, Al-karith apostatized from Islam and joined the Roman emperor. One day, Al-karith recited this holy Quranic verse before the Roman emperor:

Whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers. (3:85)

In fact, Al-karith did not memorize any Quranic verse except the previously mentioned one. When the emperor heard the verse, he decided to write a letter to the king of the Arabs asking for answers to his questions.

If the king answered them, the emperor decided that he would release all the Muslim captives; otherwise, he would ask the captives to convert to Christianity and would kill any one of them who would refuse.

Hence, the emperor posed the following questions to 'Umar in a letter:

(1) What is the exegesis of Surah Al-Fatihah?

(2) What is the water that is from neither the earth nor the heavens?

(3) What is the thing that breathes although it has no soul?

(4) What is the material from which the rod of Moses was made? What was its name? How long was it?

(5) What is the maiden that is possessed by two brothers in this world and by one of them only in the other world?

When he read these questions, 'Umar could not find any answer to them; he therefore hurried to Imam Ali ('a) and presented them before him.

In reply to the emperor, Imam Ali ('a) wrote the following letter:

In the Name of Allah; the All-beneficent, the All-merciful (I begin).

From Ali ibn Abi Talib, the son-in-law of Muhammad (S), the inheritor of his knowledge, the closest of all creatures to him, the henchman of him, the one to whom loyalty has been made incumbent (by Allah) upon all people and repudiation of whose enemies has been made obligatory by Allah upon all people, the one who is the delight of the Messenger of Allah, the husband of his daughter, and the father of his descendants; to Caesar the Roman emperor:

First of all, I praise Allah save Whom there is no god. He is the knower of all hidden matters and the sender of all blessings. He whom Allah guides, there can be none to lead him astray, but he whom Allah leads astray, there can be none to lead him to the right path.

Your letter has been received and 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab presented it to me. Concerning your question about the Name of Allah the All-exalted (mentioned in Surah Al-Fatihah), it is the name that holds remedy for all maladies and substitution for all medications.

Concerning the exegesis of the word Al-Rahman (the All-beneficent), the All-beneficent Lord is the aid of every one who believes in Him. It is furthermore a name that is not called to anyone save Allah the All- beneficent, the All-blessed, and the All-exalted.

Concerning the exegesis of the word Al-rahim (the All-merciful), it indicates that the Lord shows mercy to everyone who had disobeyed Him, but then believed and acted good deeds.

Concerning the exegesis of 'Alhamdulillahirabbi'l- 'alamia (All praise be to Allah, the Lord of All Worlds),' this is praise of our Lord, the All-blessed and All-exalted, for the blessings He is conferring upon us.

Concerning the exegesis of 'Malikiyawmal-dini (the Master of the Day of Judgment)', this means that He (the Lord) shall dominate over all of the creatures on the Resurrection Day. Then, He will send to Hellfire everyone who suspected Him or acted insolently in this worldly life. In fact, the chastisement of Allah the Almighty and All-exalted will not spare any doubtful or insolent person. On the other hand, Allah, out of His mercy, shall allow to Paradise everyone who acted obediently towards Him, persisted in, and kept on obeying Him.

Concerning the exegesis of 'iyyakana 'buduwaiyyakanasta 'inu (You alone do we worship and You alone do we ask for help),' this means that we seek the help of Allah the Almighty and All-majestic against Satan the accursed; lest Satan may mislead us as same as he did with you.

Concerning the exegesis of 'ihdinaAl-sirataal-mustaqima (Guide us to the right path),' this is an indication of the clear path which will lead to Paradise everyone who does righteous deeds in this worldly life.

Concerning the exegesis of 'sirata alladhina an 'amta 'alayhim (the path of those whom You have endued with blessings),' this is an indication of the very blessings that Allah the Almighty and All-majestic conferred on the prophets and the veracious people who lived before us. We thus beseech Allah our Lord to endue you with the same blessings as exactly as He did to those people.

Concerning the exegesis of 'ghayri almaghsubi 'alayhim (not those upon whom Your wrath was brought down),' this is an indication of the Jews who had changed the blessing of Allah into disbelief. As a result, He (the Lord) brought down His wrath upon them and transformed them into

apes and pigs. We thus beseech our Lord not to bring down His wrath upon us as He did to them.

Concerning the exegesis of wala alsallina (and not those who go astray),' this is an indication of your likes and you, the worshippers of the wicked cross, since you went astray after the departure of Jesus the son of Mary ('a). We thus beseech Allah our Lord not to make us go astray like you when you have gone astray.

Concerning your question about the water that is from neither the sky nor the earth, it is the water that Bilqis, the queen of Sheba, sent to Solomon the son of David. The water was namely the sweet of horses that were used for fighting in battles.

Concerning your question about the thing that breathes although it has no soul, this is the morning when it breathes away the darkness.

Concerning your question about the rod of Moses, it was named Al-barniyyah Al-ra'idah (i.e. the pioneering vessel-like rod). When it became soulful, its size would extend, but when the soul left it, it would decrease in size. It was made of boxthorn. Its length was ten arms. It was brought by Archangel Gabriel from Paradise.

Concerning your question about the maiden', it is the date-palm tree, which can be owned by both a believer like me and a nonbeliever like you although both of us are the descendants of Adam. In the Hereafter, it will be owned by the Muslims rather than the polytheists. This tree is only in Paradise, but not in Hellfire. This is the meaning of Allah's saying,

'Wherein is fruit, the date-palm, and pomegranate. (55:68)' [4]

Answering The Questions Of A Jewish Doctor

When Abu-Bakr died and 'Umar took over the office of caliphate, 'Umar went to the mosque and sat down. A man entered the

mosque and said, 'O amir Al-mu'minin, I am one of the Jews. I am their great scholar. I wish to ask you about some problems. I will embrace Islam if you can convince me.'

'Umar said, 'What are your problems?'

He said, 'Three, three, and one. I will ask you if you please, or you may guide me to ask anyone else who is more knowledgeable, if you wish.'

'Umar said, 'Go and ask that young fellow who is Ali ibn Abi Talib.'

The Jew went to Imam Ali ('a) and asked him questions. Imam Ali ('a) said,

Why did you say three, three, and one, but not seven?

The Jew said, 'That would have been due to my ignorance! If you could not answer the first three questions, there would be no need to ask the rest.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

Will you accept Islam if I give you the correct answers?

The Jew said, 'Yes, I will.'

Then, Imam Ali ('a) said,

Go ahead and ask.

The Jew asked, 'Which were the first rock placed on the earth, the first spring which gushed out of the earth, and the first tree which grew on the earth?' Imam Ali ('a) replied,

O Jew! You (the Jews) say that the first rock placed on the earth was the one in Baytal-Maqdis (the Holy Shrine in Jerusalem), but you lie; rather,

it was in fact the rock which Adam brought down to the earth from Paradise.

You say that the first spring which gushed out on the earth was one in Bayt Al-Maqdis , but you lie; rather, that spring was the spring of youth in which Joshua the son of Nun washed the fish and the same one from which Al- Khasir drank. Whoever drinks from it will become immortal.

The Jew said, 'You are true. This has been recorded in Aaron's handwriting on the authority of Moses.'

Then, Imam Ali ('a) continued,

You say that the first tree which grew on the earth was an olive tree, but you lie; rather, the first tree was the date-palm tree that Adam brought down to the earth from Paradise.

The Jew said, 'You are true. This has been recorded in Aaron's handwriting on the authority of Moses.'

Then, the Jew asked, 'How many are the leaders of true guidance of this community whom are not affected by the disappointment of those who will disappoint them?'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

They are twelve in number.

The Jew said, 'You are true. This has been recorded in Aaron's handwriting on the authority of Moses.'

Then, the Jew asked, 'Where in Paradise does your Prophet sit?'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

He sits in the noblest and highest place in the Eden Gardens.

The Jew said, 'You are true. This has been recorded in Aaron's handwriting on the authority of Moses.'

Then, the Jew asked, 'Who will accompany him in his place of residence?'

Imam Ali ('a) replied,

He will be accompanied by the Twelve Divine Leaders.

The Jew said, 'You are true. This has been recorded in Aaron's handwriting on the authority of Moses.'

Then, the Jew asked the seventh question and accepted Islam.[5]

Answering The Questions Of A Group Of Jews

A group of Jews went to see 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab when he became the caliph. They said, 'You are in charge of the affairs after your prophet. We have come here to ask you several questions. If you give us the correct answers, we will believe in you, accept your religion, and follow you.'

'Umar said, 'Ask whatever you wish to ask.'

They said, 'Inform us about the locks of the seven heavens; the grave which carried its resident around; the one who admonished his own nation but was neither of the jinn nor of the humans; the place on which the sun shone only once and never again; the five creatures which were not created in the womb; of the one, the two, the three, the four, the five, the six, the seven, the eight, the nine, the ten, the eleven and the twelve.'

'Umar looked down, opened his eyes wide, and said, 'You have asked 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab about things that he does not know. However, the Prophet's cousin will answer all your questions.'

Then, 'Umar sent after Imam Ali ('a). When the Imam ('a) came, 'Umar said to him, 'O Abu'l-Hasan, these Jews have asked me

questions none of which I could answer. They have pledged to believe in the Prophet if we give them the right answers.'

Imam Ali ('a) thus said to them,

O group of Jews, present your questions.

They related to him what they had asked 'Umar. The Imam ('a) asked,

Do you have any other questions?

They said in the negative.

Answering their questions, Imam Ali ('a) said,

The locks of the heavens stand for associating partners with Almighty Allah, and the keys to them stand for professing that there is no god save Him, by saying, la-ilahaillaallah(There is no god but Allah).

The grave which carried its resident around was the large whale that moved around at sea when Jonah was in its stomach.

The one that advised his people while it was neither jinn nor human was the ant which spoke with Solomon the son of David.

The place where the sun shone only once and never again was in the depth of the sea which the Honorable and Exalted Allah split up for the Children of Israel to pass (when they were fleeing from Egypt and chased by Pharaoh) and where Pharaoh and his soldiers were drowned.

The five creatures that were not created in wombs were Adam, Eve, the rod of Moses, the she-camel of (Prophet) Salih, and Abraham's ram.

The One is the Honorable and Exalted Allah with Whom there are no partners.

The two are Adam and Eve.

The three are the archangels Gabriel, Michael, and Seraph.

The four are the Torah, the Bible, the Psalms of David, and the Quran. The five are the five prayers made obligatory upon the Holy Prophet.

The six are the six days (i.e. phases) during which Allah created the heavens, the earth, and whatever lies in between as we read the saying of the Honorable and Exalted Allah: 'We created the heavens and the earth and all between them in six days.'

The seven are the firmaments about which the Honorable and Exalted

Allah says:

'And have We not built over you the seven firmaments.'(78:12)

The eight are angels who bear the Divine Throne as we read Allah's saying,

'And eight will that Day bear the Throne of your Lord above them.'

The nine are the miracles which were sent to Prophet Moses the son of 'Imran.

The ten are the more days referred to in the following verse as said by the Honorable and Exalted Allah: 'We appointed for Moses thirty nights and completed (the period) with ten (more) '

The eleven are the stars about which Joseph told his father: 'I did see eleven stars.'

The twelve are times Moses was advised to strike at the rock by Almighty Allah Who says,

'Strike the rock with your rod.' Then, gushed forth there from twelve springs (7:160).' 6

The Excellences Of The Holy Prophet Muhammad

A Syrian Jewish scholar who had read the Torah, the Bible, the Psalms of David, and the books of other prophets came to Al-Madinah and met some companions of the Holy Prophet (S) among whom were Imam Ali ('a), Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, and Abu-Ma'bad Al-Juhani. A lengthy debate took place between the Jewish scholar and Imam Ali ('a); therefore, we will hereinafter mention a part of it.

The Jewish scholar, addressing the attendants, said, 'O community of Muhammad, you have not left any virtue, rank, or merit of any of the prophets and messengers of God but that you ascribed it to your prophet. Now, will you answer me if I pose questions to you?'

The attendants did not reply to the Jewish scholar except for Imam Ali ('a) who, without hesitation, said,

Yes, I will. Whatever rank and virtue that Allah the Almighty and All-majestic had conferred upon any prophet and any messenger of Him, He gave its like wholly to Muhammad (S). Moreover, Almighty Allah increased Muhammad (S) virtues in many folds as He had given to the other prophets.

The Jew asked, 'Will you answer my questions?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

Yes, I will. Today, I will mention such virtues of Allah's Messenger (S) that will delight the hearts of the believers and remove any doubt that may be arisen about any of his virtues. Whenever the Holy Prophet (S) mentioned one of his virtues, he would say, 'No pride!' As I will mention before you his virtues, I do not intend to offend the prophets or to belittle them; rather, I will mention these virtues as a sort of thanking Almighty Allah for He has given to Muhammad virtues like theirs and even more, since He has preferred him to them'

The Jew asked, 'Allah accepted the repentance of Adam after he had made a mistake.'

Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), Allah has revealed to him what is greater than accepting the repentance of Adam. Allah the Almighty and All-majestic thus says,

‘‘That Allah may forgive you your past faults and those to follow and complete His favor to you and keep you on a right way. (48:2)’

On the Resurrection Day, Muhammad (S) shall come without being answerable for any sin and without being responsible for any burden.

The Jew asked, ‘Allah raised Idris 7to a high place and fed him from the fruit of Paradise after his death. Did Allah do such a thing with Muhammad?’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he has been given what is even better than this. Allah majestic be His praise said to Muhammad,

‘And We exalted for you your esteem. (94:4)’

This is in fact sufficient exaltation for Prophet Muhammad (S). If Idris was fed from the best food of Paradise after his passing away, Muhammad (S) was fed from the Paradisiacal food in his worldly life. One day, Muhammad (S) was starving when Archangel Gabriel came to him with a vessel from Paradise full of some food. The Prophet (S) handed it over to his household. When he wanted to give part of it to his companions, Archangel Gabriel took it from his hand and said,

‘Eat this, because it is from the best food of Paradise that Allah the Almighty and All-majestic has given to you exclusively; therefore, this food must not be eaten by anyone except a prophet or a prophet’s successor.’ We therefore ate from it. In fact, I can find the flavor of that food even at this moment.

The Jew said, 'As for Noah, he acted patiently for the sake of Allah and established a perfect argument on his people when they gave the lie to him.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. Muhammad (S), as well, acted patently for the sake of Allah and established a perfect argument on his people when they disbelieved, banished, and cast stones at him. Abu-Lahab even covered the Prophet (S) with amnions(1) of a camel and a sheep. As a result, Allah the All-exalted revealed to Gabel the angel of mountains to split the mountain and be under the command of Prophet Muhammad (S).

So, the angel came to the Prophet (S) and said, 'I have been ordered to be obedient to you in everything you may order me to do. If you now order, I will shut the mountains on these people and destroy them.' However, the Holy Prophet (S) said to the angel, 'I have been sent as mercy (and nothing else). O my Lord, please guide my people, because they do not know (the reality).'

When Noah was sure of the drowning of his people, he felt sympathy with them on account of his family relation ties with them. He thus felt for them and said, 'O my Lord, my son is surely of my family!'

Answering him, Allah blessed and exalted be His Name said, 'He is not of your family. Surely, he has done other than good deeds.' By these words, Almighty Allah wanted to entertain Prophet Noah. As for Muhammad (S), when he despaired of any reformation of his people due to their cureless obstinacy, he unsheathed in their faces the sword of reprimand and he did not feel anything for them, including the family relation ties.

The Jew asked, 'When Noah prayed to his Lord, the sky poured down heavy water.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. Noah's prayer was a sort of imprecation of Allah's wrath upon his people. As for Muhammad (S), the clouds poured forth their water for mercy. After his migration to Al-Madinah, the people of the city came to the Holy Prophet (S) on a Friday and said, 'O Allah's Messenger, the raindrops were withheld, our plants paled, and the leaves fell down.' Immediately, the Holy Prophet (S) raised his blessed hands in prayer so highly that his armpits were seen while there was no single cloud in the sky. He did not stop praying until Allah poured forth rain so heavily that

(1) Amnion is the inner membrane that forms round a developing fetus of an animal.

even the strongest young man could not return home despite all efforts made. The rain did not stop for a whole weak that the people, on the second Friday, came and said, 'O Allah's Messenger, the walls of our houses fell down, and we can no longer go on journeys or ride on our animals!'

The Holy Prophet (S) smiled and said, 'See how son of Adam feels bored impatiently!' He (S) then prayed, saying, 'O Allah, make the rain pour around us but not upon us. O Allah, please make it pour on the outskirts of the city and in the dried out farms.' People noticed that rain was pouring heavily in the outskirts of the city, while it stopped in the center. That was one of the honors that Almighty Allah conferred upon the Holy Prophet (S).

The Jew asked, 'As for Prophet Hud, Allah gave him victory upon his enemies by means of sweeping wind. Did Allah do such a thing to Muhammad?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. Muhammad (S) was given even better than that. On the Day of the Ditch (i.e. the Battle of Al-Khandaq), Allah the Almighty and All- majestic gave victory to Muhammad (S) over his enemies by means of wind, when He sent on them wind that carried pebbles and hosts that they could not see.

Additionally, Allah the All-blessed and All-exalted supported Muhammad (S) with eight thousand angels more than what He gave to Prophet Hud and preferred him to Prophet Hud by another point: the wind that was sent for Prophet Hud was wind of wrath, while the wind sent for Prophet Muhammad (S) was wind of mercy. In this respect, Allah the All-blessed and All-exalted says,

'O you who believe, call to mind the favor of Allah to you when there came down upon you hosts; so, We sent against them a strong wind and hosts that you saw not; and Allah is Seeing what you do. (33:9)'

The Jew said, 'As for (Prophet) Salih, Allah took out for him a she-camel as a lesson for his people.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was given what is even better than that. The she-camel of Prophet Salih did not speak to him and did not testify to his Prophethood. As for Muhammad (S), one day, we were with him in one of his military expeditions when a camel came towards us and grumbled. Then, Allah the Almighty and All-majestic gave it the ability to speak, and it said, 'O Allah's Messenger, so-and-so had used me for long years and when I became too old to work, he decided to slaughter me. I now seek your protection, O Allah's Messenger, from him.' Immediately, the Holy Prophet (S) called the owner of the camel and asked him to give the camel to him as gift. When the man did, the Holy Prophet (S) released it.

The Jew said, 'As for Abraham, he recognized Almighty Allah through natural means and he believed in Him through personal learning.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was given even better than that when he also recognized Almighty Allah through natural means and believed in Him through personal conclusions. Prophet Abraham attained

that at the age of fifteen, while Prophet Muhammad (S) did so at the age of seven only. A group of Christian merchants came to Makkah and offered their merchandise in the place between the Safa and Marwah hillocks.

When they saw Muhammad (S), they recognized him as the promised prophet from his features, sublimity, the introductory news of his advent, and marks. They therefore asked, 'O boy, what is your name?' 'Muhammad,' he answered. 'What is your father's name?' they asked. ''Abdullah,' he answered. Pointing to the earth, they further asked, 'What is this?' 'This is the earth,' he answered. Pointing to the sky, they asked, 'What is that?' 'That is the sky,' he answered. 'Who is the lord of these two?' they asked. 'Allah is their lord,' he answered. He then reproached them and said, 'Do you intend to make me doubt Allah the Almighty and All-majestic?'

O Jew, Muhammad (S) recognized Almighty Allah through natural means although his people were disbelievers. While they used to swear by the diving arrows and serving idols, he used to say, 'There is no god but Allah.'

The Jew said, 'Abraham was screened from Nimrod through three screens.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was screened from those who had intended to assassinate him through five screens. Three of these five may be the equivalent of the three screens given to Abraham. Still, there are two more for Muhammad (S) that must be considered excellence for him. As for the first screen, Almighty Allah says, 'And We have set a bar before them.' As for the second screen, Almighty Allah says,

''And a bar behind them.) As for the third screen, Almighty Allah says, '' And thus have we covered them so that they see not. (36:9)'

As for the fourth screen, Almighty Allah says, 'And when you recite the Quran,

We place between you and those who believe not in the Hereafter a hidden barrier. (17:45)'

As for the fifth screen, Almighty Allah says,

''Reaching unto the chins, so that they are made stiff-necked. (36:8)'

These are the five screens given to Prophet Muhammad (S).

The Jew said, 'Abraham abashed the one who had disbelieved in the evidence of his Prophethood.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

This is true. Ubayy ibn Abi-Khalaf Al-Jamhi, disbelieving in the afterlife, came to the Prophet (S) challenging, and said, 'O Muhammad, who will revive these bones when they have rotted away?' Immediately, Almighty Allah made Muhammad (S) to speak of one of His decisive signs, saying, 'He will revive them Who produced them at the first, for He is Knower of every creation.' Thus, Muhammad mortified the disbeliever in the evidence of his Prophethood, making him leave with abashment.

The Jew said, 'Abraham reduced the idols of his people into fragments on account of his anger for Allah.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he toppled and turned upside down three hundred and sixty idols from the roof of the Ka'bah. He then threw these idols out of the borders of the Arabian Peninsula and humiliated with sword those who used to serve these idols.

The Jew said, 'Abraham ordered his son to lie down and flung him down upon his face.'

Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

This is true. After that incident, Abraham was given ransom. As for Muhammad (S), he was stricken by a more calamitous misfortune. He stopped at the dead body of his uncle kamzah, the lion of Allah and His Messenger and the supporter of His religion, but he did not show any sort of grief and did not let a single tear pour down of his eyes, because he only and purely wanted to attain the pleasure of Almighty Allah through showing patience and to surrender to all of His acts under all circumstances.

The Prophet (S) added, ‘Had it not been for that I fear lest Safiyyah (kamzah’s sister) should be sad, I would have left the body of kamzah un-buried so that he would be resurrected from the stomachs of beasts and the craws of birds. Also, I would not do so for fear that it would be taken as tradition after me.’

The Jew asked, ‘The people of Abraham decided to set him on fire; yet, he stood that steadfastly. Then, Allah changed the fire (into which Abraham was cast) into coolness and peace. Did Allah do such a thing with Muhammad?’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was poisoned by a woman from Khaybar when he resided there. Yet, Almighty Allah changed that poison into coolness and peace in the stomach of the Holy Prophet (S) up to the end of his lifetime. It is well known that poison burns when it enters the intestines in the same way as fire does. You cannot deny so, because it is an aspect of Allah’s omnipotence.

The Jew said, ‘Jacob must be greater (than Muhammad), because Allah made the tribes to be his offspring and made Mary the daughter of ‘Imran to be one of his she-descendants.’

Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

This is true. Yet, Muhammad (S) is even greater as regards the shares of prosperity he won. Allah made Fatimah , the doyenne of all the women of the worlds, to be his daughter and made Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn to be his grandsons.

The Jew said, 'Jacob stood the departure of his son so steadfastly although sadness was about to ruin his health.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. However, the sadness of (Prophet) Jacob was followed by meeting with his son (for whose departure he was sad). As for Muhammad (S), his son Ibrahim was caused to die by Allah during his lifetime, while his son was the delight of his eye. Almighty Allah put Muhammad (S) to this test so that He would give him a great reward in return.

Muhammad (S) thus said, 'Souls may be sad and hearts may be restless, and we are very sad for you, O Ibrahim. Yet, we never say any word that may bring down the wrath of the Lord.' In all situations, Muhammad (S) did things that please Allah dignified be the mention of Him and surrendered to him under all conditions.

The Jew said, 'Joseph suffered the bitterness of departure and he was put in prison so that he would avoid disobedience (to Allah). Before that, he was cast in a pit alone.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he also suffered the bitterness of estrangement and departed from his family members, children, and wealth. Leaving all that behind his back, he emigrated from the sanctuary and safe haven of Almighty Allah (i.e. Makkah). When Allah the All- exalted saw the distress and sorrow of Muhammad (S), He blessed and exalted be His Name make him see a dream similar to the dream that was seen by (Prophet) Joseph in interpretation. Then, He demonstrated before all people how the dream came true.

Thus, Allah said,

'Certainly, Allah had shown to His Messenger the vision with truth: you shall most certainly enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah pleases, in security; some having their heads shaved and others having their hair cut; you shall not fear. (48:27)'

As Joseph was detained in prison, the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad) detained himself in the col for three years during which he was prevented from contacting his relatives and kinsmen and they (i.e. the polytheists of Makkah) imposed on him the most restricted constraint.

Then, Allah dignified be the mention of Him warded off their plot in the most obvious form when He sent the weakest of all of His creatures to swallow the document in which they had decided to cut off all relations with the Holy Prophet (S).

As Joseph was thrown down in a pit, Muhammad (S) detained himself in a cave out of fear of his enemies until he said to his companion (in the cave), 'Grieve not! Surely, Allah is with us.' For this situation, Allah has praised him in His Book.

The Jew said, 'As for Moses the son of 'Imran, Allah gave him the Torah in which there is the judgment (i.e. laws) of Allah.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he has been given what is even better than that. As equivalence to the Torah, he has been given Surah Al-Baqarah, Surah Al-Ma'idah, the three Surahs beginning with ta-Sin (i.e. Surahs Al-Shu'ara', Al-Naml, and Al-Qasas), Surah ta-Ha, the half of the MufassAl (i.e. the last four -or three- parts of the Holy Quran).

As equivalence to the Psalms of David, Muhammad (S) has been given the other half of the MufassAl and the Surahs beginning with tasbih (i.e. Quranic chapters that begin with such words of glorification like sabbaha and yusabbihu).

As equivalence to the books of Abraham and Moses, Muhammad (S) has been given Surah Bani-Isra'il (or Al-Isra') and Surah Bara'ah (or Al-

Tawbah). As additional favor that Allah has conferred upon Muhammad (S), He gave him the seven long Surahs and Surah Al-Fatihah, which is the seven oft-repeated verses and the Great Quran. Moreover, Muhammad (S) has been given the Book and wisdom.

The Jew said, 'As for Moses, he was spoken by Allah confidentially on Mount Sinai.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), Almighty Allah revealed to him at the Farthest Lot-tree. So, his position in the heavens is praised and his situation at the ultimate boundary of the Divine Throne is commended.

The Jew said, 'Allah cast affection from Him on Moses.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), Allah gave him what is even better than that. He cast on him affection from Him due to which Muhammad's name is always attached to Almighty Allah's Name in the profession of Islam (i.e. shahadah).

Profession of Islam cannot be perfect unless the two following statements are said altogether: 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's messenger.' Thus, whenever a voice is raised with the mention of Allah, the name of Muhammad is raised, too.

The Jew said, 'Because of the most virtuous standing of Moses with Allah, He revealed to his mother.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. Allah majestic be His praise conferred upon Muhammad's mother such grace that He gave her the name of her newborn. She accordingly said, 'Allah and the people of knowledge bear witness that Muhammad is expected.' Likewise, the angels bore witness that the prophets had recorded Muhammad's name in their books. Due to the

grace of Almighty Allah, He gave her Muhammad and gave her his name, which involves the virtuous standing he enjoyed with Allah.

In dream, she was told, 'What you bear in your womb is a chief. When you give birth to him, you should give him the name of Muhammad.' Therefore, Allah derived the name of Muhammad from one of His Names; Allah is Mahmud (the All-praised) and the Prophet is Muhammad (the praised).

The Jew said, 'As for Moses the son of 'Imran, Allah sent him to Pharaoh and showed him the grandest sign.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad, Almighty Allah sent him to many tyrants like Abu-Jahl Ibn Hisham, 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, Shaybah, Abu'l-Bukhtari, Al-Nasr ibn Al-karith, Ubayy ibn Khalaf, Munbih and Nabih the sons of Al- Hajjaj, and the five mocking persons (i.e. the scoffers): Al-Walid ibn Al- Maghirah Al-Makhzumi, Al-'As ibn Wa'il Al-Sahmi, Al-Aswad ibn Abd- Yaghuth Al-Zuhri, Al-Aswad ibn Al-Muttalib, and Al-karth ibn Abi'l- talalah. Therefore, he showed them the signs in the horizons and in their own selves so that the truth will be demonstrated obviously before them.

The Jew said, 'Allah inflicted retribution on Pharaoh for Moses.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

This is true. Likewise, Allah the Almighty inflicted retribution on these tyrants for Muhammad (S). As for the scoffers, Allah the Almighty has said,

'Surely, We will suffice you against the scoffers. (15:95)'

Consequently, Allah killed each of them in a way different from the other on the same day. As for Al-Walid, he passed by a snare that had been distributed and put on the public way. So, a fragment of that snare hit Al-Walid and cut off his ankle. He died bleeding while he was repeating this statement: 'The Lord of Muhammad has killed me.'

As for Al-'As ibn Wa'il, he went to a place to excrete feces and the rock on which he sat rolled. He therefore fell down and broke into pieces. While he was dying, he said, 'The Lord of Muhammad has killed me.'

As for Al-Aswad ibn Abd-Yaghuth, while he was sitting in the shadow of a tree after he had gone out to receive his son Zam'ah, Archangel Gabriel took his head and hit it frequently with the tree. He shouted at his slave, 'Save me from this!' His slave said, 'I cannot see anyone doing this to you except you yourself.' So, he was killed while he was repeating, 'The Lord of Muhammad has killed me.

As for Al-Aswad ibn Al-Muttalib, the Holy Prophet (S) invoked Allah to blind his sight and make him suffer the loss of his son. On that very day, he was in a certain place when Archangel Gabriel slapped his face with a green leaf that caused him blindness. He survived until he suffered the loss of his son.

As for Al-karth ibn Abi'l-talalah, he left his house when wind blew so heavily that his face turned black. When he returned home, he informed his family members that he was Al-karth. They became so angry that they killed him while he was shouting, 'The Lord of Muhammad has killed me.'

The Jew said, 'Moses the son of 'Imran was given the rod that turned into a serpent.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was given what is even better than that. Abu-Jahl 'Amr Ibn Hisham had purchased a camel from a man and had not paid him its price, because he engaged himself in drinking intoxicants. When the creditor complained to one of those who used to scoff the Holy Prophet (S) about that, the scoffer said to him, 'May I lead you to a person who can take out your due from Abu-Jahl?' 'Yes, please,' said the man. So, the scoffer led him to the Holy Prophet (S), because Abu- Jahl used to say, 'I wish that Muhammad would ask me for a favor

so that I would mock at and reject him!' The man went to the Holy Prophet (S) and said, 'I have been told that you have a good friendship with 'Amr Ibn Hisham (Abu-Jahl)! I now seek your intercession for me with him.'

Immediately, the Holy Prophet (S) accompanied the man to the house of Abu-Jahl. When Abu-Jahl opened the door, the Holy Prophet (S) said to him, 'Give this man his due.' Without hesitation, Abu-Jahl hurried and gave the man his due. When Abu-Jahl met his companions afterwards, one of them asked him surprisingly, 'You did so because you feared Muhammad. Did you not?' Abu-Jahl answered, 'Woe betide you all! You have to excuse me! When Muhammad came to me, I saw to his right side men carrying glittering lances and to his left side two serpents from whose eyes fires were glittering.

If I had refused, the men would certainly have stabbed me with their lances and the two serpents would certainly have swallowed me.' Of course, this is greater than what had been given to Moses.

The people of Quraysh were very annoyed by the Holy Prophet's promulgations for the religion. One day, he stood up, ridiculed their intellects, carped at their faith, insulted their idols, and declared that their fathers had gone astray. Extremely distressed by this act, Abu-Jahl said, 'In fact, to die is better for us than to exist (and hear such words). Is there any one among you, O group of Quraysh, who will kill Muhammad and suffer the retaliation of his folks?' They all answered in the negative; therefore, he said, 'I will kill him. Then, the sons of Abd Al-Muttalib will either kill me in retaliation or let me off.' The groups, encouraging him, said, 'If you do, you will do the people of this town such a great favor that they will never forget for you.'

Abu-Jahl said, 'He usually prostrates himself very frequently around the Ka'bah. If he comes and prostrates, I will smash his head with a rock.' Before long, the Holy Prophet (S) came, circumambulated the Holy House seven rounds, and prostrated himself for a considerable time. Abu-Jahl picked up a rock and approached the Prophet (S) from the head's side. When he was close enough to hit the Prophet (S) with the rock, a serpent

that opened its mouth widely came towards Abu-Jahl from the side of the Holy Prophet (S).

Upon seeing the serpent, Abu-Jahl feared very much that his hand trembled and he dropped the rock on his foot and wounded it. Bleeding, pale, and sweaty, Abu-Jahl ran away towards his companions who met him with this question: 'We have never seen you in such a state of fear! What happened?' Abu-Jahl said, 'Woe betide you all! You have to excuse me. From the side of him (i.e. the Holy Prophet), a serpent came and opened its mouth so widely that it was about to swallow me. As a result, I threw the rock and it wounded me.'

The Jew asked, 'Moses was given the white hand. Was such a thing ever done with Muhammad?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was given what is even better than that. Whenever he sat, light was glittering to his right and left sides that all people used to see it.

The Jew asked, 'A dry path in the sea was made for Moses. Was such a thing ever done to Muhammad?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was given what is even better than that. We were with him on our journey towards kunayn when we faced a valley that was pouring forth water. According to our estimation, we knew that the water was about fourteen fathoms high. Our companions said, 'O Allah's Messenger, the enemy is behind us and this valley is in front of us. We will definitely be perishing.'

This statement is similar to the statement of the companions of Moses when they saw the sea in front of them and Pharaoh and his soldiers behind them. Allah's Messenger rode off and said this prayer: 'O Allah, you have made an indication for every one of Your missioned prophets. Please, show me Your omnipotence now.' The Holy Prophet (S) rode on

and led the animals through the waterfall. Neither the hooves of the horses nor the feet of the camels were wet at the least. We thus crossed it as if it was split up before us.

The Jew said, 'Moses was given the rock from which twelve springs gushed forth.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was given what is even better than that. When he resided at Al-kudaybiyah and the polytheists of Quraysh laid siege to him, his companions could not find water for neither themselves nor their horses whose bellies became so thin because of thirst.

When they complained to him (i.e. the Holy Prophet) about that, he asked for a piece of cloth and put his blessed hand over it. Immediately, springs of water gushed forth between his fingers. We, as well as our horses, had our full from that water and filled every skin we had with water' etc.

The Jew asked, 'Moses was given manna and quails. Was Muhammad given such things?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was given what is even better than that. Allah the Almighty and All-majestic made lawful for Muhammad (S) and his community the spoils of war although He had never made them lawful for any other nation. This is of course better than manna and quails.

What is more, Allah decided the intention of doing a righteous deed as a righteous deed (in reward) for Muhammad (S) and his community, while this has not been given to any other bygone community. Accordingly, when one of the community of Muhammad (S) is determined to do a righteous deed but he does not do it practically, he will gain one reward for that. If he does it practically, then ten rewards will be recorded for him.

The Jew said, 'Moses was overshadowed by the clouds.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. This was done to Moses in the years of wandering only. As for Muhammad (S), clouds overshadowed him since the day of his birth and up to the day of his passing away, both at home and on journeys. This is of course better than what was made to Moses.

The Jew said, 'Allah made the iron pliant to David; so, he could make iron armors.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was given what is even better than that. Allah the Almighty and All-majestic made the solid, unshakable rocks pliant to him and gave him the ability to melt these rocks. At Bayt Al- Maqdis (the holy shrine at Jerusalem), a rock melted in the hand of the Holy Prophet (S) so flexibly that it became just like a piece of dough. We saw that with our eyes and noticed it under his pennon.

The Jew said, 'David wept for his sin so heavily that even mountains moved out of fear of him.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was given what is even better than that. Whenever he stood up for performing a prayer, a sound like the buzzing of a boiler on a hearth would be heard from his chest and body because of his heavy weeping, although Allah the Almighty and All- majestic had given him immunity against chastisement.

However, he (the Holy Prophet) always wanted to show reverence to his Lord by means of weeping and to be an example to be followed. For ten whole years, he stood up on the toes of his fingers until his two feet swelled and his face paled. During these years, he used to stay up the whole night in worship until he was blamed for that by Almighty Allah Who accordingly revealed to him, saying,

'Ta-Ha! We have not revealed the Quran to you that you may be exhausted. (20:2)'

Rather, the Quran was revealed to him so that he may be happy with it.

He used to weep so heavily that he fainted. He was once asked, 'O Allah's Messenger, is it not that Allah has forgiven all your sins the past and the coming?' He answered, 'This is true. Yet, should I not be a thankful servant (of Allah)?'

The Jew said, 'Solomon was given such sovereignty that none else would ever have its like.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was given what is even better than that. An archangel, who had never descended to the earth before that; namely, Michael, descended to the Holy Prophet (S) and said, 'O Muhammad, you can live as a luxurious king! These are the keys of the hoards of the earth; they are kept with you. You can turn the mountains of this earth into gold and silver and this will not decrease the least amount of your reward that you will receive in the Hereafter.'

However, the Holy Prophet (S) waved to Archangel Gabriel, who was his most intimate friend from amongst the angels, (asking for his opinion) and Gabriel, through a gesture, asked him to be modest. Thus, the Holy Prophet (S) said, 'No, I will live like a servant who can find something to eat on a day and cannot find anything to eat on a couple of days. I will then join my brothers, the prophets who lived before me.'

Accordingly, Allah gave him as an addition the River of Al-Kawthar and granted him the right of intercession. These two are of course seventy times greater than the kingdom of this world from its beginning and up to its termination. Allah also promised to give him the Praiseworthy Standing. On the Resurrection Day, Almighty Allah will allow him (i.e. the Holy Prophet) to sit to the right side of the Divine Throne. This is absolutely better than what was given to (Prophet) Solomon.

The Jew said, 'The wind was made subservient to Solomon and it blew in his country; a month's journey in the morning and a month's journey in the evening.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was given what is even better than that. He was carried at one night from the Sacred Mosque to the Furthest Mosque, which is a whole month's journey (by natural means). He was then ascended to the kingdom of the heavens, which is a fifty-thousand years' journey. All that took place in less than one-third of a single night.

He was led to the leg of the Divine Throne where he approached through knowledge and came even closer. From Paradise, a green cushion was hanged down to him. Light overcast his sight and he, accordingly, saw the grandeur of his Lord with his heart rather than his eyes. He was then distant two bows' length or even nearer. Then, He revealed to His servant what He revealed. One of the revelations of the Lord at that situation was the following verse that is in Surah Al-Baqarah:

'Unto Allah belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; and whether you make known what is in your minds or hide it, Allah will bring you to account for it. He will forgive whom He wills and He will punish whom He wills. Allah is Able to do all things. (2:284)'

The Jew said, 'As for John the son of Zachariah, he was granted wisdom, forbearance, and understanding while he was still child. He used to weep although he had not committed any sin and he used to observe fasting ceaselessly.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was given what is even better than that. John the son of Zachariah existed in a time where there were neither idols nor ignorance. Muhammad (S) was granted wisdom and understanding while he lived amongst the idolaters and the party of Sa-

tan. He nevertheless never liked any of their idols, never readied himself for participating in their feast days, and never told a single lie.

Moreover, he was trustworthy, truthful, and forbearing. He used to observe fasting for one whole week, less than that, and more than that. When he was asked about that, he would answer, 'I am not like any of you. I stay under the shade of my Lord Who gives me food and drink.' He used to weep so heavily that his prayer-place would become wet (because of his tears) for fear of Allah the Almighty and All-majestic although he had not committed any offense.

The Jew said, 'Jesus the son of Mary is claimed to have spoken in the cradle while he was still a young boy.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), when he fell from his mother's womb to the ground, he was in such a posture that he put his left hand on the ground and raised the right towards the sky, moving his lips with words of professing Almighty Allah as the One and Only God.

From his mouth, light came through which the people of Makkah could see even the palaces of Busra in Syria and what was built behind them, the red palaces of the Yemen and what was built behind them, and the white palaces of Istakhr (Persia) and what was build behind them. At the night of the Holy Prophet's birthday, the whole world gleamed' etc.

The Jew said, 'Jesus is claimed to have cured the blind and the leper by the permission of Allah.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he was given what is even better than that. He cured the handicapped. He (S), once, asked about one of his companions, and he was told, 'O Allah's Messenger, the man has been inflicted with such a bodily disability that he became like a featherless youngster.' The Holy Prophet (S) visited the man and found him as exactly as he was described.

The Prophet (S) said, 'You used to repeat a certain supplication when you were healthy.' The man answered, 'This is true. I used to say, 'O Lord, as for any punishment that You will impose upon me in the Hereafter, please make me suffer from it in this worldly life instead.'' Instructing him, the Holy Prophet (S) said, 'You should have said, 'Our Lord! Give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and guard us from the doom of Fire.'' When the man repeated these words, he recovered, regained health, and could accompany us again' 8

The Jew asked, 'Jesus the son of Mary is claimed to have the ability to inform his people of what they eat and what they store at their houses.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he did what is even greater than that. Jesus informed his people of things that nothing separated them from him except a wall. As for Muhammad (S), he gave the new of Mu'tah (a region in current Jordan) while he was not there. Hence, he described the war in details and mentioned the names of the martyrs although Mu'tah was a whole month's journey away from the Holy Prophet (S). When men used to come to him to present their problem, he would say to them, 'Will you say (your problem) or let me say it?' They would say, 'You may say it, O Allah's Messenger.' So, the Prophet (S) would inform them of what they had come to say.

The Prophet (S) used to inform the people of Makkah about their secrets completely. One day, Safwan ibn Umayyah and 'Umayr ibn Wahab had held a secret discussion. 'Umayr then came to the Holy Prophet (S) and said, 'I have come to you asking for releasing my son.' The Holy Prophet (S) said, 'This is not true. When you met Safwan at Al-katim and mentioned those whom we had killed in the Battle of Badr, Safwan said to you, 'By Allah, death is better for us than life after what Muhammad had done to us. How can one enjoy life after those people whom were killed at the spring of Badr?' You answered, 'Had it not been for my depen-

dants and a debt that I must pay off, I would certainly have released you from Muhammad.' Safwan said to you, 'I pledge that I will pay off your debts. As for your daughters, they will be joined to my daughters and they will then encounter whatever is encountered by my daughters, be it good or evil.' You answered, 'So, keep it secret and supply me with a weapon so that I will go to Muhammad and assassinate him.' You are now here to assassinate me.' 'Umayr had no other way but to confess, saying, 'You are truthful, O Allah's Messenger. I now bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that you are Allah's messenger.' Stories like this one are too many to be counted.

The Jew said, 'Jesus is claimed to have made from mud things in the form of birds; and when he breathed into it, it would be a bird by the permission of Allah.'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. Muhammad (S) also did things similar to this one. During the Battle of kunayn, he picked up a rock from which we could hear statements of praise and glorification of Allah. He (S) then said to the rock, 'Split!' So, the rock split into three fragments, each one of them said a statement of glorification different from the statements said by the other two fragments. On that day in Al-Batha', he talked to a tree and it responded to him when each leaf of it expressed statements of praising, glorifying, and elevating Almighty Allah. He (S) then said to the tree, 'Split apart.' So, it split into two halves. He (S) then said to the two halves, 'Stick together.' So, they stuck together. He (S) then said to the tree, 'Bear witness that I am the Prophet.' So, it bore witness. He (S) then said to it, 'Go back to your place, repeating the same statements of praise, glorification, and elevation of Allah.' So, it did. This tree was originally at the side of the Al-Jazzarin in the city of Makkah.

The Jew said, 'Jesus is claimed to have wandered in devotion to the cause of Allah.'

Imam Ali ('a) said,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), his wandering in devotion to the cause of Allah was practiced through jihad. In a period of ten years, he (S) called an uncounted number of the inhabitants of the cities and deserts to fight in the cause of Allah and could terminate a great numbers of the Arabs through his sword (in order to spread the belief in Allah as the One and Only God).

The Jew said, 'Jesus is claimed to have been abstinent (from worldly pleasures).'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

This is true. As for Muhammad (S), he is truly the most abstinent of all prophets. He had thirteen wives and a big number of slave women. He never left any remnant of food. He never ate a loaf of wheat bread. He never had his full of barley bread for three consecutive nights. When he passed away, his armor was still in mortgage with a Jew for four dirhams. Although he visited many countries and he was allowed to take the spoils of war, he did not leave a single golden or silver coin. On a single day, he (S) used to distribute three or four hundred thousand (dirhams) among people. At night, when a beggar would come to him asking for something, the Holy Prophet (S) would say to him, 'I swear by Him Who has sent Muhammad with the truth, the family of Muhammad at this night does not possess a single sa'9 of barley or wheat, one dirham, or one dinar.

Declaring conversion to Islam, the Jew affirmed, 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. I bear witness that Muhammad gained together all the ranks and virtues that were given to each prophet or messenger of Allah. Moreover, Allah gave Muhammad additional ranks and virtues in many folds.'

Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, having been astounded by the discourse of Imam Ali ('a), said, 'O Abu'l-Hasan, I bear witness that you are one of those who are firm in knowledge.'

The Imam (‘a) answered,

I should not have anything else to say about a person whom Allah the All- sublime has deemed sublime when He said about him, ***‘Most surely, you conform yourself to sublime morality. (68:40)’***[10]

Explaining Quranic Verses

An atheist came to Imam Ali (‘a) and said, ‘Had it not been for the many contradictions and inconsistency of many verses of the Quran, I would certainly have believed in your religion.’

When the Imam (‘a) asked the atheist to present these contradictory Quranic texts, the atheist mentioned a number of verses, which seemed to those who lack adequate reason and understandability to be contradictory.

Revealing the actual meanings of these verses, Imam Ali (‘a) said, As for the verse: ***‘They (i.e. the hypocrites) have forsaken Allah; so, He has forsaken them, (9:67)’*** this means that these hypocrites forsook Almighty Allah in this worldly life when they did not act obediently towards Him; He will therefore forsake them in the Hereafter when He will not decide any part of His reward for them. They will thus become forsaken from prosperity.

Similarly, Almighty Allah says, ***‘Today, We forsake them, as they neglected the meeting of this day of theirs. (7:51)’*** This means that He will forsake them as He will deprive them of any reward that He will decide for His saints who used to obey Him in their worldly lives and used to refer to him constantly when they believed in His messengers and Him and feared Him although they have not seen Him with their mere eyes.

As for Allah’s saying, ***‘Your Lord is not forgetful, (19:64)’*** this means that our Lord, the All-blessed and All-exalted, never forgets and is never inattentive; rather, He is always the Preserver and the All-aware of all things. In one of their expressions, the

Arab used the expression 'forget' to imply forsaking and deprivation of good.

As for these Quranic verses:

(1) ***'The day on which the spirit and the angels shall stand in ranks; they shall not speak except he whom the Beneficent Allah permits and who speaks the right thing, (78:38)'***

(2) ***'Then, their excuse would be nothing but that they would say: By Allah, our Lord, we were not polytheists, (6:23)'***

(3) ***'Then, on the resurrection day, some of you shall deny others, and some of you shall curse others, (29:25)'***

(4) ***'That most surely is the truth: the contending one with another of the inmates of the fire, (38:64)'***

(5) ***'He will say: Do not quarrel in My presence, and indeed I gave you the threatening beforehand, (50:28)'***

(6) ***'On that day, We will set a seal upon their mouths, and their hands shall speak to Us, and their feet shall bear witness of what they earned. (36:65)'***

Each one of these verses presents a certain situation on the Resurrection Day, which will be as long as fifty thousand years. The people of acts of disobedience to Almighty Allah will renounce each other and curse each other on the Resurrection Day, because the word of atheism (kufr) can be used to imply renunciation. For instance, in Surah Ibrahim, it is confirmed that Satan will say to the disbelievers,

'Surely, I disbelieved in (i.e. renounced) your associating me with Allah before.'(14:22)

Similarly, Prophet Abraham the Friend of the All-beneficent Lord said, 'We disbelieved in you,' which means: we renounce you.

At another situation on the Resurrection Day, the people will be gathered for interrogation. They will weep at that situation. If their weeping, voices are made to be heard by the inhabitants of this world, they will therefore astound them from seeking earnings and split their hearts' etc.

At another situation on the Resurrection Day, they will be gathered and allowed to speak. Some of them will say, 'By Allah, our Lord, we were not polytheists.' These people are particularly those who professed Allah as the One and Only God in their worldly lives, but their belief in Allah will not benefit them, because they violated the messengers of Allah, suspected what these messengers had conveyed to them from the Lord, broke the covenants they had made to the messengers' successors, and replaced the lowly with the prosperous. So, Allah will deny their belief in Him, saying, 'See how they lied to themselves.' Then, Almighty Allah will lay a seal on their mouths and allow their hands, feet, and skins to testify to every act of disobedience to Him they had committed. After that, He will remove the seal of their mouths and they will say to their skins, 'Why have you testified against us?' The skins will answer, 'We have been allowed to speak by Allah Who gives the ability of speaking to all things.'

At another situation on the Resurrection Day, they will be gathered and allowed to speak. Then, some of them will run away from others. Referring to this situation, Allah the Almighty and All-majestic says, 'The day on which a man shall fly from his brother, his mother, his father, his spouse, and his son''

At another situation on the Resurrection Day, they will be gathered and the saints and elects of Allah will be allowed to speak. Hence, none will speak except those who are granted permission to speak by the All- beneficent Lord and to say good wording. The messengers will first stand up and they will be asked about the conveyance of the messages they had carried to their peoples. When the peoples will be asked, they will deny the conveyance of

the Lord's message by His messengers. About this situation, Allah the All-exalted says, '

Most certainly, then We will question those to whom the messengers were sent, and most certainly We will also question the messengers. (7:6)'

The peoples will deny, saying,

'There came not to us a giver of good news or a warner! (5:19)'

Then, the other messengers will ask the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) to testify to their perfect conveyance of the message of the Lord, and the Holy Prophet (S) will testify to the messengers and will renounce the denial of the peoples. He will then say to the peoples,

'Indeed, there has come to you a giver of good news and a warner; and Allah has power over all things. (5:19)'

This means that Allah has power to make your organs testify against you with regard to the conveyance of the Lord's message by the messengers. Likewise, Allah says to His Prophet (Muhammad),

'How will it be then when We bring from every people a witness and bring you as a witness against these? (4:41)'

Then, they will fail to reject the Prophet's testimony, because they will fear lest Allah will lay a seal on their mouths and allow their organs to testify to what they used to do. The Prophet (S) will then testify against the hypocrites and disbelievers of his folks and community as regards their atheism and obstinate refusal of the truth as well as their breaking of the covenants they had made with him, their deliberate alteration of his practice, their violations against his family members, and their turning back on their heels, following the examples of the bygone nations who had wronged and betrayed their prophets. All of them will then confess, saying,

'O our Lord, our adversity overcame us and we were an erring people. (23:106)'

Once more, they will be gathered at another situation on the Resurrection Day when the standing of Muhammad (S), which is 'the Praiseworthy Standing,' will be demonstrated and when he will be allowed to speak. He will then praise and thank Almighty Allah in such a manner than none did ever before. He will then praise the angels without leaving even one of them not praised. He will then praise the prophets in such an unprecedented manner. He will then praise all the believing men and women, starting with the veracious, the martyrs, and the righteous respectively. Then, the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth will thank him for so. This is what Allah the All-exalted has meant by saying,

'Your Lord will send to you a praiseworthy position. (17:79)'

Blessed will be the one who will have a share or a portion at that place; and woe will betide the one who will not have such a share or a portion.

Once more, they will be gathered at another situation on the Resurrection Day and they will be discriminated from one another (according to their deeds). All these situations will precede the Judgment, because when the Judgment is started, every single person will be distracted from everything and everyone else by what he has to present. We beseech Allah to grant us the blessing of that day.

About the exegesis of Almighty Allah's saying,

'Some faces on that day shall be bright, expecting (the reward of) their Lord, (75:22-23)'

This will happen at a place to which the saints of Allah will be led after the accomplishment of the judgment. It is namely a river called the River of Eternity. They will wash themselves in that river and drink from the water of another river and, as a result,

their faces will turn brightly white when all harms, moles, and dust will be removed from them. Then, they will be ordered to enter Paradise. From this very place, they will expect and look forward to gaining the rewards of their Lord. From this very place too, they will enter Paradise and receive the greetings of the angels about which Almighty Allah says,

'Those whom the angels receive in a good state, saying: Peace be on you! Enter the garden for what you did. (16:32)'

Then, they will be awarded Paradise and making their eyes enjoy what Allah has promised to give them. This is the meaning of 'Expecting their Lord.'

As for the exegesis of Almighty Allah's saying, ***'And certainly he saw him in another descent at the farthest lote-tree, (53:13-14)'*** this means that Muhammad (S) reached the boundaries of the farthest lote-tree where none of the creations of Almighty Allah is allowed to reach. As for His saying, ***'The eye did not turn aside, nor did it exceed the limit. Certainly, he saw of the greatest signs of his Lord, (53:17-18)'*** this means that he (S) saw Gabriel in his real image twice; at this situation and at another one. The creation of Archangel Gabriel is too great, because he is one of the Spirited-angels (ruhaniyyun) whose creation and features are too great to be described by anyone save Allah the Lord of the Worlds.

As for the exegesis of Almighty Allah's saying, ***'And it was not vouchsafed to any mortal that Allah should speak to him unless it be by revelation or from behind a veil, or that He sends a messenger to reveal what He wills by His leave, (42:51)'*** it is clear. The Messenger used to receive the revelations from the messenger-angels of the heavens and they convey them to the earth. The speech between the messenger of the earth and Him was direct, in the sense that the messenger-angels of the heavens are not intermediated. Once, the Messenger of Allah (S) asked, 'O Gabriel, have you seen your Lord?'

The archangel answered, 'My Lord cannot be seen.'

'Where from do you receive the revelation?' asked the Holy Prophet (S).

'I receive it from (Archangel) Seraph,' answered Gabriel.

'Where from does Seraph take it?' asked the Holy Prophet (S).

'Seraph takes it from an angel of a higher rank within the spirited-angels,' answered Gabriel.

'Where from does that angel take it?' asked the Holy Prophet (S).

'The revelation is cast into the heart of that angel in a manner of casting.'

The revelation is thus the word of Allah the Almighty and All-majestic;and the word of Allah is not always the same. A category of the word of Allah is what was addressed to the messengers. Another category is what was cast into their hearts. A third category comes in the form of a dream that the messengers see. A fourth category comes in the form of revelation and descended words that are recited and read. This is also the word of Allah.

As for the exegesis of Allah's saying, ***'Nay, but surely on that day, they will be covered from their Lord, (83:15)'*** it means that they will be prevented from receiving the reward of their Lord on the Resurrection Day.

As for the exegesis of Allah's saying,

'Wait they, indeed, for nothing less than that the angels should come unto them, or your Lord should come, or there should come one of the portents from your Lord? In the day when one of the portents from your Lord comes, its belief avails naught a soul which theretofore believed not, nor in its belief earned good. Say: Wait you! Lo! We too are waiting, (6:158)'

Allah, in this verse, tells Muhammad (S) about the future of the polytheists and the hypocrites who refuse to respond to Almighty

Allah and to His Messenger. He the All-exalted thus tells that they should wait for nothing but that the angels should come to them. Because they did not respond to Allah and to His Messenger, Allah says that He, the Lord, should come or some portents of Him should come. This means that chastisement will inflict these non-believers in their worldly lives in the same way as chastisement inflicted the bygone peoples. Then, Almighty Allah says, 'In the day when one of the portents from your Lord comes, its belief avails naught a soul which theretofore believed not, nor in its belief earned good.' This indicates the souls that did not believe before the coming of the portent, which is namely the rising of the sun from the west.

In another verse, Allah says, ***'But Allah came to them from a place whereof they did not reckon. (59:2)'*** The coming of Allah means that He poured down chastisement upon them. Likewise, He says, ***'Those before them plotted; so, Allah came to their buildings from their foundations. (16:26)'*** The coming of Allah to their buildings also means that He sent chastisement upon them.

The 'meeting with Allah' that is mentioned in several Quranic verses signifies the resurrection. For instance, as for this verse, ***'Whoever hopes to meet his Lord, the term appointed by Allah will then most surely come, (29:5)'*** it means that whoever believes in the resurrection, then Allah's promise of reward and threat of punishment will certainly come. In conclusion, meeting with Allah does not imply seeing Him; rather, it implies the resurrection.

As for the verses in which the word sann is mentioned, this word sometimes means doubt and at other times certitude. When it is mentioned to express the resurrection, then it means certitude; but when it is mentioned to express a manner of the hypocrites in this worldly life, then it means doubt'

As for the exegesis of this verse: ***'Whoever shall do of good deeds and he is a believer, there shall be no denying of his exertion, (21:94)'*** and this verse: ***'Most surely, I am most Forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good, then continues to follow***

the right direction, (20:82)' repentance, faith, and doing good deeds will not benefit anyone unless they are attached to guidance to the truth. In other words, belief does not always save from perdition and redeem from what the transgressors will encounter; otherwise, the Jews will be saved, because they believe in Allah and profess His being the One and Only God. Moreover, Iblis (Satan) and the other people who profess the Unity of Allah, although they are considered infidels, will be saved if belief alone saves from perdition. Demonstrating the features of those who will be redeemed, Almighty Allah says,

'Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with iniquity; those are they who shall have the security and they are those who go aright. (6:82)'

On the other hand, He the Almighty says, ***'Those who say with their mouths, 'We believe!' And their hearts do not believe. (5:41)***

Faith has such numerous manners and standings that it would take a long time if we want to explain all of them. For instance, faith can be classified into two classes: cordial faith and verbal faith. An example of the verbal faith is the faith of the hypocrites whom the Holy Prophet (S) overcame with sword (i.e. power) and they had to claim being faithful for fear of being killed. However, their hearts never tasted faith. Therefore, cordial faith means submission to the Lord. Whoever gives up all of his affairs to their Owner, will not defy Him arrogantly, just as Iblis (Satan) did when he refused to prostrate himself before Adam and just as the majority of nations did when they refused to obey their prophets because of arrogance. Thus, their belief in Allah as the One and Only God did not promote them. Likewise, the long prostration of Iblis did not promote him after he had refused to prostrate himself before Adam. Iblis prostrated such a long prostration that it took four thousand years, but it did not benefit him, because he only intended to gain worldly pleasures and to gain respite. Similarly, prayers and fasting are not helpful unless one is guided to the true path of redemption and to the ways of the truth.

Almighty Allah did not leave any justifiable excuse for His servants when He made clear all of His portents and sent messengers (to all nations) so that people should not have a plea against Him after the coming of messengers. He has not emptied His lands from a person who has acquaintance with all that is needed by the creatures or a learnt person who seeks redemption. Yet, these are very few.

Almighty Allah applied this to the nations of the bygone prophets and made them lessons for the next nations. For example, He says about the people of Prophet Noah, ***'And there believed not with him but a few. (11:40)'***

About the believing people from the community of Prophet Moses, He the Almighty says, ***'And of Moses' folk, there is a community who lead with truth and establish justice therewith. (7:159)'***

About the Disciples of Prophet Jesus, He the Almighty says that Prophet Jesus said to the children of Israel, ***'Who will be my helpers in the cause of Allah?' The disciples said, 'We will be Allah's helpers. We believe in Allah, and bear you witness that we have surrendered unto Him. (3:52)'*** This means that these disciples testify to the people of virtue that they are virtuous and they do not refrain from responding to the orders of their Lord out of arrogance. Hence, none of the children of Israel responded to Jesus except the Disciples.

Almighty Allah selected certain people for the mission of bearing the knowledge and made it obligatory upon His servants to obey these bearers. He the Almighty thus says:

- ***'Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority. (4:59)'***

- ***'If they had referred it to the messenger and to such of them as are in authority' (4:83)'***

• ***'Be careful of your duty to Allah, and be with the truthful. (9:119)'***

• ***'None knows its explanation save Allah and those who are of sound instruction. (3:7)'***

• ***'Go to houses by the gates thereof. (2:189)'***

These houses are the houses of knowledge that Almighty Allah has entrusted with the prophets. The gates of these houses imply the successors of the prophets.

Any act of kindness that is not in congruity with the consent, covenant, law, practice, and instructions of the divinely selected people is rejected and unacceptable, and the doers of such deeds are then considered nonbelievers even if they may enjoy the features of faith. This is clear in Almighty Allah's saying,

'And naught prevents that their contributions should be accepted from them save that they have disbelieved in Allah and in His messenger, and they come not to worship save as idlers, and pay not their contribution save reluctantly. (9:54)'

Hence, the people of faith who have not been guided to the path of redemption will not be benefited by their belief in Allah when they refuse and ward off the right guidance of the true saints of Allah. Moreover, they will be of the losers on the Resurrection Day. Thus has Allah the Almighty said: ***'But their faith could not avail them when they saw Our doom. (40:85)'*** Besides, there are many other examples in the Holy Quran proving this fact.

True guidance is thus the loyalty to the divinely ordained leaders. Referring to this fact, Almighty Allah says, ***'And whoso takes Allah and His messenger and those who believe for guardian (will know that), lo! The party of Allah, they are the victorious. (5:56)'***

In this holy verse, the expression: 'those who believe 'stands for the people whom Allah has entrusted with His creatures; namely,

the argument-persons of Allah and the prophets' successor in every age.

Likewise, not every Muslim one who professed the two professions of Islam is considered believer. The hypocrites used to profess that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's messenger; yet, they used to violate their covenant with Allah's Messenger concerning the religion of Allah as well as His laws and the portents of his Prophethood regarding his nomination of his successor. They also used to hide their dislike for these things and their intention to violate their covenants with him whenever they would be able to do so. Demonstrating this fact to His Prophet, Almighty Allah said,

'But nay, by your Lord, they will not believe in truth until they make you judge of what is in dispute between them and find within themselves no dislike of that which you decide, and submit with full submission. (4:65)'

In the same manner, He the Almighty has said, ***'Muhammad is but a messenger; messengers the like of whom have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dies or is slain, you will turn back on your heels? (3:144)'***

He the Almighty has also said, ***'You shall journey on from plane to plane. (84:19)'***

This means that you will follow the example of the nations that existed before you with regard to their disloyalty to the prophets' successors after the passing away of the prophets. Many other examples have been mentioned in the Book of Allah concerning this topic.

When this matter annoyed the Holy Prophet (S) with regard to the end result of his people that Allah has shown to him, Allah the Almighty revealed to him, saying, ***'Let not your soul expire in sighing for them. (35:8)'*** He also said to him, ***'Grieve not for the disbelieving folk. (5:68)'***

As for the exegesis of Almighty Allah's saying, ***'And ask those of Our messengers whom We sent before you, (43:45)'*** this is one of the proofs that Allah has given to His Prophet and due to which He has made the plea irrefutably binding on the creatures. As Allah the Almighty has sealed the prophets with Prophet Muhammad (S) and made him His messengers to all of the nations and all of the communities, He endued him exclusively with the virtue of ascending to the heavens at that night, which is known as the night ascension. During the ascension, Almighty Allah gathered all the prophets before him (i.e. Prophet Muhammad) and they informed him about what they were asked to convey to their peoples. They thus made him know about the laws, portents, and proofs of Almighty Allah. They then professed of his preference to them and of the preference of his successors and argument-persons who should come after him. They also professed of the preference of the believing male and female partisans of his successor who confessed the virtue of the virtuous people and did not act arrogantly with regard to obeying their orders. He also came to know the people who had obeyed these prophets and the others who had disobeyed them as well as everyone from the past and the next generations.

As for the slips of the prophets and what Allah has mentioned in this respect in His Book, which has mentioned that they had committed wrongdoings, although they are all metonymical expressions, this is in fact one of the most evident signs of the dazzling wisdom, the invulnerable power, and the predominant almightiness of Allah. To explain, because Almighty Allah has already known that the miraculous acts of His prophets would be too great to be accepted by their peoples and that some of these people would consequently take these prophets as deities, just as the Christians who worshipped the son of Mary as deity, Almighty Allah has mentioned these matters (that apparently show that these prophets committed wrongdoings) to prove that these prophets cannot attain the perfection that is enjoyed by none save Allah the Almighty and All- majestic. As proof, Almighty Allah says about Jesus and his mother, ***'And they both used to eat***

earthly food. (5:75)' This means that whoever eats earthly food will have a certain weight; and whoever has a certain weight will be too incompetent to be deity. In fact, the prophets were far away from defects so that they might require discipline or punishment' etc.

As for the verses that may imply the coming of Almighty Allah, they have conveyed nothing but the truth. Yet, the coming of Almighty Allah is not similar to the coming of His creatures, because He is the Lord of all things.

Some verses of the Book of Allah cannot be interpreted according to the extrinsic meanings of their words, and the acts and words mentioned in these verses cannot be likened to the acts and words of human beings. I will give you an example that will be sufficient for you to understand the meaning involved, by the will of Allah:

Almighty Allah, in the Holy Quran, reports Prophet Abraham as saying, ***'And he said, 'Lo! I am going unto my Lord Who will guide me.' (37:99)'***

The going of Abraham to his Lord stands for his devotion to serving and worshipping his Lord as painstakingly as possible. This shows that the interpretation of the verse is different from the actual meaning of its words.

Almighty Allah also says, ***'He has sent down for you of cattle eight kinds. (39:6)***

He also says, ***'He sent down iron, wherein is mighty power and many uses for mankind. (57:25)***

In these two verses, 'sending down' these things stands for creating them. Almighty Allah says,

'Wait they, indeed, for nothing less than that the angels should come unto them, or your Lord should come, or there should come one of the portents from your Lord? (6:158)'

Addressing our Prophet Muhammad (S), Almighty Allah says, 'Are the hypocrites and the polytheists waiting for nothing but that the angels will come to them and they will see them with their own eyes?'

The coming of the Lord, in the verse, stands for the coming the Lord's decree and command. The coming of the portents of the Lord stands for the coming of the chastisement of the Lord in this worldly life, the same of which had been already inflicted upon the bygone communities and the past nations.

Almighty Allah says, ***'See they not how we come to the land, reducing it of its outlying parts? (13:41)'*** In this verse, He uses the expression 'coming' to express the perdition of the ages and generations.

He the Almighty also says, ***'Allah (Himself) fights against them. How perverse are they? (9:30)'*** This means: May Allah curse them! Hence, He has used fighting to express cursing.

Likewise, Almighty Allah says, ***'Fought be man! How ungrateful he is! (80:17)'*** This means: cursed be man!

Almighty Allah also says, ***'So, you did not slay them, but it was Allah Who slew them, and you did not smite when you smote the enemy, but it was Allah Who smote. (8:17)'*** In this verse, Almighty Allah ascribes the act of the Holy Prophet (S) to Himself, which proves that the interpretation of the verse is unlike the actual meanings of the words of its revelation.

Likewise, Almighty Allah says, ***'Nay! They are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord. (32:10)'*** The meeting of the Lord stands for the resurrection.

Almighty Allah also says, ***'Who know that they shall meet their Lord' (2:46)'*** This means that the believers are certain that they shall be resurrected on a great day. Hence, 'meeting' for the be-

lievers stands for the resurrection, while it stands for seeing and looking in the concept of the nonbelievers'

As for Almighty Allah's saying, ***'And a witness from Him recites it, (11:17)'*** this is the plea of Almighty Allah that He has established again His creations when He made them know that none deserves the position of a prophet except one who is apt enough to replace him and none recites it except one who is as pure as the prophet so that one who has been touched by disbelief in any period of his lifetime will not deserve to occupy the position of a prophet, especially the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S)

As for the trust to which you have referred, it is specially the trust that must not and may not be enjoyed except by the prophets and their successors, because these are the only persons whom Almighty Allah has entrusted His creation with them and whom He has made pleas on His lands.

As for the point you have aroused about the mentioning of the attributes of Almighty Allah in both singular and plural forms, let it be known to you that Allah blessed and exalted be His Name is One and Only and Singular, as exactly as He has described Himself. He is the eternal and everlasting Light that none can ever be the like of Him. He never changes. He decides whatever He wills and chooses. Nothing can ever repel His decree and nothing can ever ward off His act. Whatever He has created would never increase His kingdom and almightiness, and whatever He has not created would never decrease any part of what belongs to Him. So, He created whatever He willed as exactly as He willed. Then, He made the doing of certain things to be at the hands of His trustees whom He has selected. Therefore, their deeds are His deeds and their commands are His commands, just as He has said, ***'Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allah. (4:80)'***

He has also made the heavens and the earth a vessel for whom He wishes from among His creatures so that the wicked will be discriminated from the good, although He has already known the discrimination of the two parties.11

Answering the Questions of Ibn Al-Kawwa'

Ibn Al-Kawwa', a filthy hypocrite, used to ask Imam Ali (‘a) many questions for no reason but to annoy the Imam. One day, he asked the Imam (‘a):

Can you answer these questions?

What is the thing that is sighted at night and sighted in daylight?
What is the thing that is blind at night and blind in daylight?
What is the thing that is sighted at night but blind in daylight?

What is the thing that is blind at night but sighted in daylight?
Answering him, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

You should ask about matters that concern you and should not ask about things that are beyond your concern.

What is sighted at night and in daylight is one who believed in the messengers (of Allah) and the messengers’ successors who existed in the past, in the Books (revealed by Allah), in the prophets, in Allah, and in His Prophet Muhammad (S), and admitted to the divinely commissioned loyalty to me; so, this one can see at night and in daylight.

What is sighted at night but blind in daylight is one who, although he believed in the past prophets and divinely revealed Books, refused to believe in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) and denied the truth. So, he can see at night but he is blind in daylight.

What is blind at night and blind in daylight is one who disbelieved in the prophets, their successors, and the Books that had been revealed, and when he lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S), he did not believe in him either and did not profess the divinely ordained loyalty to me. So, he denied Almighty

Allah and His Prophet. He is therefore blind at night and blind in daylight.

What is blind at night but sighted in daylight is one who had disbelieved in the bygone prophets, their successors, and the Books; but when he lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S), he believed in Almighty Allah and in him, believed in my Imamate, and accepted the divinely ordained loyalty to me. So, he is blind at night but sighted in daylight.

O Ibn Al-Kawwa', be it known to you that through us, i.e. the descendants of Abu Talib, Allah has commenced Islam and through us, too, He shall seal it.12

Answering More Questions

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have climb the minbar of the Al-Kufah Mosque and said,

Ask me before you lose me. I will definitely answer any question about anything that is beneath the Divine Throne. No one claims so after me except a liar or an impostor.

A man who seemed to be one of the Arab Jews stood up and said, ‘I will ask you; so, prepare yourself for answering my questions.’

Because of the coarseness of the man, some people jumped in his face and wanted to discipline him, but the Imam (‘a) said,

Leave him and do not be so hasty. Verily, the pleas of Allah cannot be established through such things like hastiness and impulsion. The proofs of Almighty Allah cannot be demonstrated through depriving an asker of any respite to pose his questions.

The Imam (‘a) then turned his face towards the asker and said,

You may ask any question as much as you can utter it and as much as your knowledge allows you to ask. Then, I will answer you, by the will of Allah with such an answer that removes all of your doubts and mutes all of the filthy suspicions of straying off the right path. Eventually, there is neither might nor power except with Allah, the All-high and All-great.

The man thus asked, 'What is the distance between the east and the west?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

It is the same distance of the air.

The man asked, 'What is the distance of the air?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

It is as same as the rotation of the globe.

The man asked, 'What is the distance of the rotation of the globe?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

It is the same distance of a one-day walking to the sun.

The man asked, 'When will the Resurrection Day come?' The Imam ('a) answered,

It will come at the presence of death and the termination of the lifetime.

The man asked, 'What is the border of Bakkah inside Makkah?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

Makkah is the sides of the Holy Precinct, while Bakkah is the very place of the Holy House (i.e. the Ka'bah).

The man asked, 'Why was Makkah given this name?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

This is because Allah the All-exalted spread (makka) the earth from beneath it.

The man asked, 'Why was Bakkah given this name?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

This is because it smashed (bakka) the necks of the potentates and the sinners.

The man asked, 'Where had Allah been before He created His Throne?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

All glory be to the One Whose description cannot be attained even by the bearers of His Throne despite their proximity to the Chair of His Honor, nor can the archangels recognize His attributes despite their proximity to the lights of His glorified majesty. What! It is improper to ask about Allah with such question words like, 'where', 'in what', 'which', or 'how'.

The man asked, 'How long had the Throne of Allah remained on the water before He created the earth and the heavens?'

Imam Ali ('a) answered,

Perhaps, you are not skilful enough in calculation. Are you?'

The man answered, 'I am skilful enough.'

Imam Ali ('a) expressed,

If the whole earth is filled with grains of mustard seed until the amount even blocks the air and blocks up whatever is between the earth and the sky, and then you, despite your weakness, are allowed to remove this amount of mustard seed from the east to the west each time one grain only, and you are given such a long lifetime to do this mission completely, and you are given power to do so, and you thus move these grains and calculate them, then that will be easier for you than calculat-

ing the number of the years during which the Throne of Allah remained on water before the creation of the earth and the heavens.

Nevertheless, what I have described to you is only one-tenth of one-tenth of one-tenth of one-one hundred thousandth of the actual number. Yet, I implore Almighty Allah's forgiveness for my failure to be accurate in calculating the very number and for my restricting the infinite duration (of the Divine Throne remaining on water). 13

Answering The Question Of Dhi'lib

Once, Imam Ali ('a) spoke to the people in the Al-Kufah Mosque from the pulpit, saying,

Ask me before you lose me. I swear by Him Who split the grain and created the souls; if you ask me about any holy Quranic verse whether it was revealed at night, in daylight, at Makkah, at Al-Madinah, during a journey, or at home; or whether it is repealing (another verse), repealed (by another verse), decisive, or allegorical; or ask me about its interpretation and its revelation, I will definitely answer you accurately.

A man called Dhi'lib, a very good orator and brave in heart, stood up and said, 'O Leader of the Believers, have you seen your Lord?'

The Imam ('a) replied,

What is this, Dhi'lib? How will I worship a lord whom I do not see?'

The man said, 'How have you seen Him? Please, describe Him for us.'

The Imam ('a) said,

The eyes are not able to see Him physically, but it is the hearts that see Him through the reality of belief. O Dhi'lib, my Lord is Subtle in subtleties, but He cannot be described by means of subtle matters. My Lord is Great, but He cannot be described by means of greatness. His great-

ness surpasses all greatness, but he cannot be described by means of any such greatness. He is glorious in His Glory, but He cannot be described in terms of intensity. He is before everything and it cannot be said that something was before Him.

He will be after all things but it cannot be said that there will be something after Him. He willed the existence of things but not by means of first thinking about it. He comprehends things but not with a great deal of effort. He is in all things, but He is not mixed with them, nor is He separate from them. He is clearly manifest, but not with contacts and changes. He shines, but not in the form of being found out with eyesight. He is far, but not in the form of distance.

He is near, but not in the form of nearness. He is very fine, but not in the form of physical fineness. He exists, but not after nothingness. He acts, but not because of being forced. He measures things, but not by means of movement. He wills, but not by means of thinking. He hears, but not with tools. He sees, but not with instruments. He is not contained in place and held up in times. Attributes do not limit Him and slumber does not seize Him. His Being was before the time and His Existence was before nothingness.

He was before eternity. His giving the sense of awareness proves that He does not need tools of sensing. His giving substance to the substances is proof that His Self is not a substance. The existence of a contrary to everything is proof that there is nothing contrary to Him. His giving comparability to things is proof that there is nothing similar to Him. He has made the light contrary to the darkness, the wetness to the dryness, the harshness to the softness, and the coldness to heat.

He combines the separating ones and separates their closeness. The separation among things is evidence of the existence of the One Who causes separation in them and their combination is evidence of the existence of the One Who combines them. It is just as Allah has said,

'We have created everything in pairs so that perhaps you may take heed. (51:49)'

He has made a distinction between before and after to show that there is no before and after for Him. The instincts show that the One Who created the instincts Himself has no instinct. The time is evidence that there is no timing for the One Who made the time. His hiding things from each other is evidence that nothing hides them from their Creator. He was the Lord when there was nothing to enjoy His Lordship. He was to be worshipped when there was no worshipper. He had the knowledge when there was nothing to know. He was hearing when there was nothing to hear. 14

Supplications Of Imam 'Ali

Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib('a) is the chief of the monotheists, the leader of the pious people, and the inviter to Allah on this globe after his brother and cousin the Holy Prophet (S). From the minbar of the Al-Kufah Mosque, he delivered numerous speeches that comprised brilliant facts about the Unity of Allah and the most wonderful features of the creation, declaring the portents of Allah, the Creator of the universe and the Giver of life.

Throughout his lifetime, Imam Ali ('a) acted as an exceptional element of true faith and center of monotheism. He raised the Word of Allah and endued the intellects with such ilumination that has been lighting up the path to the truth, scattering the murk of ignorance, and leading to the recognition of the All- great Maker of all things.

One of the aspects of Imam Ali's spiritual life was his supplications, which are considered overwhelming documents that speak of his piety and strong connection with the Creator as well as his devotion to and recognition of Him. At the same time, these supplications play a major role in guiding the bewildered souls to the truth and leading to all-inclusive integrity and reformation.

The supplications of Imam Ali ('a) worked hard in the fields of human behavior and discipline of instincts and personal whims. They therefore purify the souls from the sins of this life.

Achieving a great success, the supplications of Imam Ali as well as the other Holy Imams (‘a) have been the most widespread and the most requiring by all people. You cannot see a single house or a religious center empty of a copy of the many books that comprised such supplications that are recited day and night.

In addition, Imam Ali (‘a) taught people magnificent etiquettes and methods of supplicating. He thus taught us how to pray, how to beseech earnestly, how to resort to the Lord, and how to prepare ourselves in His presence with full submission and modesty so that we should not regard any value for ourselves when we supplicate Him. In this field, Imam Ali (‘a) taught us that we, along with all of our intellectual and material energies, are nothing if compared to the All-great Creator.

For instance, the planet on which we live is in its reality a simple and single atom that spins in this endless space that has baffled the intellects of the most skilled people and confused their minds so mystifyingly that they, despite their highly developed devices, had to confess that they could not discover even one percent of the secrets of the universe, which is only one of the creations of Almighty Allah.

Depending upon the nature on which Almighty Allah has created all human beings, man spontaneously feels the existence of the Creator Who fashioned him; therefore, man resorts to the Creator whenever he is inflicted by a vicissitude of time or by a crisis. This phenomenon is deeply rooted in human beings and connected firmly with their creation from the beginning. It can never be disconnected, because what is found in the innermost of selves in an unprompted manner is neither changeable nor erratic, as scholars of logic express.

Through his impressive supplicatory prayers, Imam Ali (‘a) opened wide the doors to connection with Almighty Allah a connection that is based on ultimate servitude to the Creator-Lord. Imam Ali (‘a) thus proved that man loses all of his values and

facts once he does not establish a connection with the Almighty Lord, the utmost and one and only goal in this existence.

The supplicatory prayers of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib and his descendants, the Holy Imams (‘a), have not been restricted to such spiritual topics like holding communion with the Lord and imploring for His pardon and forgiveness; rather, they have touched on other topics appertained to the educational, social, and political issues like what Muslims used to suffer from the oppression and persecution of the tyrannical rulers who domineered the Muslim communities during the Umayyad and ‘Abbasid dynasties.

In other words, the supplicatory prayers of the Holy Imams (‘a) are replete with all domains that bring about prosperity to humanity and promote their individual and social lives. They also represent the Islamic notion in the field of spirituality, not to mention that these supplicatory prayers are indispensable resources of Islamic education and Arabic eloquence and fluency, since they have been composed at the highest level of articulacy; therefore, they have become one of the most precious reserves of Arabic literature due to their distinctive expressiveness.

Generally speaking, the Holy Imams’ supplicatory prayers are within the treasures of monotheism and the most wholesome means of contacting the Almighty Lord. They express the unattainable scope of the Holy Imams’ fondness of and connection with the Lord.

It is worth mentioning that the late Dr. Zaki Mubarak, a famous Egyptian man of letters, had the intention to write a book about the etiquette of supplication (du’a') through the pieces of supplicatory prayers that are reported from the founders of some schools of Muslim jurisprudence and other Sufi scholars.

However, he had not had any acquaintance with the supplicatory prayers composed by the Twelve Imams of the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a). When he offered this urgent desire of him to Shaykh Muhammad Ali Al-Ya’qubi, the head of the Literary League of Al-Najaf and

the master of orators, he (Shaykh Al-Ya'qubi) asked, 'Have you seen the supplicatory prayers of the Holy Imams ('a)?' Dr. Mubarak answered in the negative; so, Al-Ya'qubi gave him the book of Al Sahifah Al-Sajjadiyyah (a collection of Imam Ali ibn Al-Husayn's supplications, famously known as the Psalms of Muhammad's Family) and some other books comprising such supplications.

Once Dr. Mubarak browsed these books, he, full of amazement and admiration, returned to Shaykh Al- Ya'qubi to declare before all the members of the said league, 'The supplications of the Holy Imams are indeed treasures of Islam and the most precious and valuable spiritual heritage of Muslims.'

Confirmedly, no other Muslim sect or heavenly-revealed religion has the like of the supplicatory prayers that are had by the Shi'ah who received them from their Imams. Indeed, the spiritual heritage represented by these supplicatory prayers has, positively and effectively, contributed to self-reformation, disciplining the human instincts, and raising the intellectual level of humanity.

Besides, these supplicatory prayers have always been the object of great interest for the scholastic media of the Shi'ah whose scholars have looked at these prayers with the eye of pride and glory.

Sayyid Ibn tawus, a master scholar, has mentioned in the introduction of his book entitled Kashf Al- MaHajjah li-Thamarat Al-Muhjah that it was one of the graces of Almighty Allah that he could keep in his library about eight hundred books comprising the supplicatory prayers of the Holy Imams ('a) that he had inherited from his forefathers while no other library of Islamic books had had such a number of books. Probably, some of these books can be found in a manuscript form in some libraries of the Islamic world.

It is also noteworthy that some scholars have already compiled the supplicatory prayers of Imam Ali ('a) in independent books like the following:

(1) Shaykh Abdullah ibn Salih Al-Bahrani Al-Samahiji (died in AH 1135) compiled the supplications of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) in a book he entitled Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah (Imam Ali’s Book of Supplications). The book was first published in Iran in AH 1325 and then reprinted by Dar Al- Ta’aruf Publications in Beirut, Lebanon.

However, the author has not mentioned the reference books from which he had quoted these supplications; therefore, they were interruptedly reported from Imam Ali (‘a). Besides, some supplications were too poor to be ascribed to Imam Ali (‘a) who is famously known as the master of eloquence and the prince of style. Finally, the book lacks harmony and accord between the supplications.

(2) Shaykh Husayn ibn Muhammad Taqi Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi subjoined to the supplications compiled by Shaykh Al-Samahiji some other supplications and compiled them in a book he entitled Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, which is different from Al-Samahiji’s Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah in the points that the author has referred to the chains of authority and the reference books from which each supplication was quoted. Besides, high quality of the supplications of the latter book can been easily inspected.

(3) Shaykh Muhammad Baqir Al-Mahmudi, the master and well-versed scholar, has allocated a special volume of his encyclopedic book entitled Nahj Al-Sa’adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah to the supplications of Imam Ali (‘a), mentioning the reference books from which these supplications have been quoted. In fact, Shaykh Al-Mahmudi has done such a great job and he has exerted remarkable efforts in this field.

To end with, the supplicatory prayers of Imam Ali (‘a) secure self-discipline and protect from any pollution with the sins of this worldly life. They open wide the door of communion between a servant and his/her Lord and present to the community a great service in the field of morality and spirituality.

In their capacity as the most brilliant spiritual and intellectual heritage owned by Muslims, these prayers must be spread among people so that they would learn very much knowledge from them and make them the pilot that lead them in the midst of the waves of moral corruption and lack of spirituality.

Supplication In The View Of Imam Ali

Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) was fond of praying to Almighty Allah under all circumstances and at all times. His lips did not stop mentioning the Lord and beseeching Him at night, in daylight, at home, on journeys, and even in the battlefields and at the most horrible hours of his lifetime.

With extreme submission and reverence, Imam Ali (‘a) used to implore Almighty Allah as earnestly as he could for mercy and forgiveness, because he felt that human beings, because of their imperfection, cannot serve and praise Almighty Allah as it should be. He therefore used to begin his supplicatory prayers with statements of praise and thanks for Almighty Allah and with references to His wonderful creation and all-inclusive mercy.

Describing Imam Ali’s inclination to supplicating, Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said,

Amir Al-Mu'minin (Imam Ali) was seen frequently supplicating. 15

About the merits of supplication, Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

Do not fall short of supplicating, because it never leads to perdition. 16
Supplication is the weapon of true believers, the pillar of the religion, and the light of the heavens and the earth. 17

Supplication is a shield for a believing person. When a door is knocked often, it will sooner or later open up. 18

Supplication is the key to success and the input for one’s wellbeing. The best prayer is what comes out of a clean chest and pious heart. In plead-

ing before Allah for help, there is the means for salvation. In sincerity, there is freedom. When distress intensifies, Allah is the only One before Whom one must implore for protection. 19

Supplication is the most beloved of all deeds to Allah. 20

Concentration on the supplicatory words is one of the conditions of response. In this respect, Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said,

Verily, Almighty Allah does not receive the supplication coming out of an inattentive heart. 21

Whenever any of you may pray for a dead person, he must not do it frivolously but must strive to be serious in his prayer. 22

Defining the best times for supplicating, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Use the opportunity for supplicating on four occasions: At the time of reading the Holy Quran, at the time of adhan (call for prayer), at the time it rains, and at the time of the meeting of two armies for martyrdom. 23

As Almighty Allah has opened the door for His servants to beseech Him, He also opened wide the door of His response to their prayers. In this regard, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Allah would never open the door for supplicating Him but He would close the door of His response to these supplications. 24

He whom is granted the opportunity to supplicate (Almighty Allah) will never be deprived of (His) response. 25

Presenting supplication as the essence of worship, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

Supplication is the brain of worship. 26

About the indispensable need for supplication, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

The person who is afflicted with hardship is not in a greater need for supplicating than the one who has been spared affliction but is not immune from it. 27

According to the method established by Imam Ali (‘a), supplicating must be preceded by statements of praise and glorification of Almighty Allah. Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) thus reports,

It is written in the book of Am r Al-Mu'min n Ali ibn Abi Talib that he (‘a) said,

‘Praise must precede supplicating. Whenever you want to pray and plead before Allah for help, you must first speak of His glory.’

He was asked, ‘How can we speak of His glory?’

The Imam (‘a) instructed,

You may say: O He Who is closer to me than my jugular veins! O He Who does whatever He wishes without fail! O He Who stands between a man and his heart! O He Who is on a high position and like Whom there is no creature! 28

Confirming this instruction, Imam Ali (‘a) is also reported to have said,

Supplicating should follow praising; therefore, praise and extol Allah the All-exalted before you ask Him for granting your needs. 29

Within his course of the etiquettes of supplicating, Imam Ali (‘a) instructed that one should invoke Almighty Allah’s blessings on the Holy Prophet and his Household before presenting one’s needs before Him.

In this connection, we find many traditions confirming that to begin any supplicatory prayer with invocation of blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household results in response to that prayer, because Almighty Allah never rejects a prayer that is preceded by this invocation.

Similarly, Almighty Allah, out of His magnanimity, decides to respond to any prayer ending with an invocation of His blessings on the Holy Prophet and his Household. This fact has been reported from Imam Ali (‘a) who says,

If you would like your request to be granted by Almighty Allah, you must begin your prayer with invoking His blessings on His Messenger and then say your request, because Almighty Allah is too generous to respond to a request and reject the other when two requests are prayed from Him together.30

Imam Ali (‘a) is also reported as saying,

All supplicatory prayers are screened from reaching the heavens until the supplicant invokes Almighty Allah’s blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household. 31

Imam Ali (‘a) also confirmed that the prayers of the infant descendants of the Holy Prophet (S) are always responded as long as they have not committed sins. He (‘a) is thus reported to have said,

The supplications of the children of my offspring are accepted unless they commit sins.

Imam Ali’s Supplicatory Prayer for Responding to the Prayers

It is reported that a man came to Imam Ali Amir Al-Mu'minin (‘a) and complained about the delay in response to his prayers.

‘Have you tried the swiftly-responded prayer?’

Imam Ali (‘a) asked.

‘What prayer do you mean?’ asked the man.

Imam Ali (‘a) thus taught him to say this supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, I beseech You by Your Name; the great, the greatest, the most majestic, the noblest, the hoarded, the hidden, the brilliant, the true, the manifest demonstration, which is light with light, light out of light, light in light, light on all light, light over all light, and light by which all darkness is shone and all hardships, all rebellious devils, and all obstinate transgressors are unraveled.

Neither a land can bear it nor can any sky hold it. Through it, all fearful ones attain security and sorceries of all sorcerers, oppressions of all oppressors, and envy of all envious ones are counteracted. Because of its greatness, all lands and oceans split and all arks stand stable when the angel pronounces it; so, waves will no more have any effect on these arks.

It is Your Name; the greatest, the greatest, the most majestic, the most majestic, the grandest light, which You have used for Yourself and by which You have prevailed on Your Throne. I turn my face towards You in the name of Muhammad and his Household and beseech You in the name of You and them to bless Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad and to' One then may submit one's personal requests. 32

Let us now present a number of Imam Ali's supplicatory prayers on various subjects:

Supplicatory Prayer On The Unity And Praise Of Allah

Although the majority of Imam Ali's supplicatory prayers comprise brilliant statements of professing the Unity of Almighty Allah, praising Him, and showing pure servitude to Him, a certain number of these prayers demonstrate the scope of the Imam's humbleness, earnest entreaty, and recognition of the Lord. In one of his supplicatory prayers, Imam Ali ('a) says,

All praise be to Allah Who is the foremost among all those to be praised, (Who is) the most ultimate to be served, (Who is) the nighest of all existent things, (Who is) the premier (of all things) while His sempiternity is unknown and His beginning is endless, (Who is) the existent prior to the existence without having a (certain) entity, (Who is) the extant every-

where without having a certain place, and (Who is) close to every confidential talk without need for proximity.

All covert things are open before Him and all intellects are too perplexed to realize His greatness. Sights cannot comprehend His greatness but hearts cannot deny recognition of Him although He is out of all sights. He represents Himself in hearts without being similar to any thing that can be defined by illusions or appreciated by impressions. He then established evidence from His own Self to prove that He is too grand to have an opposite, a rival, a match, or a like.

His Unity is the indication of His Godhead, and the death that unavoidably comes upon all of His creatures tells of His creation and omnipotence. He then created (the beings) from a sperm- fluid while they had been nothing so that He would establish evidence proving His ability to re-create them in a new creation after their termination, in the same way as He had created them in the first time.

All praise be to Allah the Lord of the Worlds Who is never harmed by the disobediences of those who disdain worshipping Him and Who is not benefited by the obedience to those who worship Him devotionally. He acts forbearingly towards the potentates who claim godhead falsely and He grants respite to those who claim that there is one sharing with Him in His realm.

He is the All-existing in His authority without a term, the lastingly Enduring in His realm after the termination of all times, the Unique, the One, and the eternally Besought of all, and He is too elevated to have a wife or a child.

He raised the sky without pillars, made the clouds move without a rein, and overcame all of His creatures without a definite number. He is thus Allah, the One and Only, the Unique, the eternally Besought of all, and He it is Who does not beget nor was He begotten, and there is none comparable to Him.

All praise be to Allah Whose favors cannot be dispensed with even by those who permanently disobey Him and the least of Whose blessings

cannot be recompensed even by those who exert all their efforts in obedience to Him. He is the All-rich Who never wards off His sustenance from those who deny Him and Whose gifts do not reduce His provisions for His creatures. He is the creator, the terminator, the restorer, the originator, and the healer of the creation.

He knows what is concealed through secrets, what is hidden in inner selves, what is expressed by the various languages, and what is changed by times. He is the Ever-living Who never dies, the All-subsisting Who never slumbers, the Eternal Who never vanishes, the All-just Who is never biased, the pardoner of the grand sins out of His favors, and the punisher of those whom He punishes out of His justice.

He never anticipates missing anyone; therefore, He is always forbearing. He is All-aware of need for Him; therefore, He is always merciful. In his decisive Book, He says,

'If Allah were to take mankind to task for their wrongdoing, He would not leave hereon a living creature.'(16:61)

I praise Him with such praise due to which I ask for more of His blessings, I seek refuge with Him against His punition, and I seek nearness to Him through my giving credence to His Prophet, whom He has chosen for (receiving and conveying) His revelations, who He has selected for (carrying) His message, whom He has given exclusively (the right of) intercession with Him, and who has carried out his duty towards Him completely; namely, Muhammad may Allah bless him, his Household, his companions, the prophets, the messengers, and all of the angels; and may He pour forth His benedictions perfectly upon them.

O Allah, all expectations have been lost, all manners have changed, all words have been proven false, and all promises have been broken except for the promises You have made, for You have promised (us) with forgiveness and favoring.

O Allah, (please) pour down blessings upon Muhammad and his Household, provide me with Your favors, and protect me against Satan the accursed.

All glory be to You, and this glorification (of mine) is only part of Your favors that You deserve praise for them. How great You are! How forbearing You are! How generous You are! Out of Your favors, Your forbearance has included even the defiance of those who disdain serving You.

Your blessings are too much to be covered by the thanking of the grateful ones. Your forbearance is too excellent to be calculated by all calculators. Your bounties are too majestic to be described by all describers.

Had it not been for Your favors, You would not have been clement to those whom You created from a sperm-fluid after they had been nothing. So, You nurtured them with the most vigorous of Your sustenance, You brought them up on Your uninterrupted graces, and You gave them the power to survive on the plains of Your lands.

However, when You called them to be obedient to You, they used Your good turns for helping them to disobey You and they denied You and worshipped others than You under Your authority!

As a result of Your clemency, You granted me respite, sheltered me under Your covering, honored me with recognition of You, made my tongue speak in praise of You, guided me to the path taking to the obedience to You, made easy for me the course taking to Your honoring, and made accessible for me to find the way taking to Your vicinity.

Nevertheless, I recompensed Your good turns with evil acts, cared for committing whatever would bring about Your wrath, moved freely in the circle that made me deserve nothing but more punishment from You, hurried up towards whatever cast me away and away from Your pleasure, pleased myself with the seductive snare of long expectation, and turned away from the fact of my short-termed lifetime, although it should have been enough admonisher for me.

Your forbearance with me has not benefited me although Your menace to deprive me of my power has already come to me; therefore, I now entreat You, despite the grand wrongdoing I have committed, to grant me more graces from You, even though I do not seem to panic about Your punish-

ment to which I am drawing myself nearer, finding slow Your ever-increasing favors to me, displeased with Your adequate sustenance to me, demanding You to endue me with Your prizes for the deeds of the sinful that I am doing, as if I am expecting Your mercy due to righteous deeds that I did not in reality do, and sparing no efforts in hoping that You would confer upon me the most enormous of Your errands, just like the doing of a criminal who has been secured from retaliation for his crimes! So, we are Allah's and to Him shall we return! It is indeed a misfortune of an unbearable burden and of an awful punishment.

Had it not been for my hope in You and for Your promise to pardon my slips, how should I expect Your absolution after I had challenged You through committing grand sins openly, while I tried my best to conceal myself from the lowliest of Your creatures? I have neither feared You while You are always with me nor have I looked up to the inviolability of Your covering up of my sins.

With what face should I meet You and with what tongue should I speak to You confidentially, after I had broken all the pledges and vows that I had made with You confirmedly and after I had made You surety over me?

Then, when I prayed You while I was sinking in wrongdoing, You responded to me! Yet, when You called me (to obey You) while I am always in urgent need for You, I refrained from answering You! Shame on me! How hideous my deed is!

All glory be to You! How horrendous insolence I have shown to You! How repugnant seduction I have drawn to myself! All glory be to You! I seek nearness to You in the name of You. I adjure You in the name of Your right. I flee to You from You. As I disobeyed You, I have indeed belittled myself, but not You!

As I depended upon my seductive prospect, I have indeed been deceived due to my ignorance, but not due to Your clemency. I have thus violated my own right, but not Your great right. Now I hope for Your mercy, believe in You, put my trust in You, return to You in repentance, and humble myself before You.

So, (please) have mercy on my poverty, neediness, falling to my forehead, and my perplexity for the shame I had acquired because of my sinning, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy!

O most All-hearing of all those who are supplicated! O best hoped One! O closest of all those whose aid is sought! I beseech You, seeking Your aid just like the seeking of one who has despaired of the response of Your creatures. So, (please) meet me with Your benevolence that You may show to my weakness, forgive me my grand sins out of Your all-inclusive mercy, and confer upon me Your immediate kind acts.

Verily, You are the best giver of the most plentiful graces of all those who may gift. There is no god save You. All glory be to You, I have been of those who committed wrongdoings. O Allah! O One and Only! O Allah! O eternally besought of all! O He Who does not beget nor was He begotten! O He like Whom there is none!

O Allah, my requests have tired me out, all ways have become narrow before me, my distant people have thrown me even farther, and my close people have become weary of me. In the midst of this, You alone are my only remaining hope after my hope for others has been cut off; and Your help alone is sought after my misfortunes have doubled up; and to You alone are my resort in hardships and comfort; so, (please) relieve the agonies of me although I should despair of Your mercy when misery reminds me of my evildoings. However, please, do not make me despair of Your mercy, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy! 33

Supplicatory Prayer On The Unity And Glorification Of Allah

In one of his supplicatory prayers on professing the unity and magnificence of

Almighty Allah, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

O Allah, You are verily Ever-living and You never die. You are so Truthful that You never tell lies. You are so Supreme that You are never defeated. You are the Creator Who does not need any help. You are so Nigh that You are never away. You are so Omnipotent that You can

never be opposed. You are so Forgiving that You never wrong (others). You are so Besought of all that You never need nourishment.

You are so Self-subsisting that You never slumber. You are so quick to respond that You never weary. You are so Seeing that You never doubt. You are so Invincible that You never need assistance. You are so Great that You are never vulnerable.

You are so Knowing that You never require learning (from others). You are so Powerful that You are never weak. You are so Forbearing that You never rush. You are so Grand that You cannot be described. You are so Faithful that You never break (Your word).

You are so Just that You are never unfair. You are so Overcoming that You are never overpowered. You are so Rich that You never need (for anything). You are so Magnificent that You can never reduce.

You are so Wise that You never treat wrongly. You are so Impenetrable that You are never subdued. You are so Famous that You are never unidentified. You are so Unique that You never require entertainment. You are so One and Only that You never want the consult of others. You are so Ample-giving that You never become exhausted (from giving).

You are so Hearing that You never miss any sound. You are so Magnanimous that You never cease giving generously. You are so Mighty that You can never be humiliated. You are so Preserving that You are never inattentive. You are so Vigilant that You never forget. You are so All-subsisting that You never sleep. You are so Lenient that You never treat with violence. You are so Tolerant that You never hurry.

You are so Witnessing that You never fail to notice. You are so Hidden that You can never be seen. You are so Everlasting that You never perish. You are so Enduring that You never deteriorate. You are so Single that You cannot be likened (to anything). You are so Commanding that You can never be rivaled.

O Generous! O Magnanimous! O Conferrer of awards! O Nigh! O Responsive! O Most High! O Majestic! O Source of peace! O Giver of secu-

rity! O Guardian over all! O Mighty! O Possessor of all mightiness! O Supreme! O Possessor of all supremeness! O Grand! O Possessor of all grandeur! O Powerful! O Possessor of all power! O He Whom is called from every remote path with various tongues, different languages, and ceaseless requests and, nevertheless, no single thing distracts Him from another thing.

You never cease to exist; ages never cause You perdition, times never change You, places can never include You, neither sleep nor slumber can ever overtake You, and nothing can ever be like You. How can You be anything other than this while You are the Creator of all things? There is no god save You. Everything is perishable except Your Face (i.e. Person), the most honorable of all faces.

Remembering You is always sacred, Your commands are always holy, duties towards You are always incumbent, Your decrees are always effective, and obedience to You is always binding. Please, pour blessings upon Muhammad and his Household, make easy my affairs that I anticipate to be difficult, release for me as well as for every believing male and female all that which I fear its agony, facilitate for me all that which I expect to be intricate, and redeem me from all that which I predict to lead me to perdition.

O most Merciful of all those who show mercy! O Lord of glory and honor! There is no god save You. All glory be to You! I have been of the wrongdoers. May Allah pour blessings upon Muhammad and upon his pure and immaculate Household. 34

Supplicatory Prayer On Professing Almighty Allah's Oneness And Expressing His Grandeur And Magnificence

Imam Ali ('a) used to say the following supplicatory prayer, which is considered one of his most outstanding supplications, on Fridays.

The supplication is full of statements of professing Almighty Allah as the One and Only God and deeming Him high above any similarity with His creatures:

All praise be to Allah Who existed from nonentity and Who created all that existed from nonentity, too. He thus used the non-eternity of all things as evidence on His sempiternity, used the failure that He added to these things as evidence on His omnipotence, and used the perishability that He imposed on all these things as evidence on His immortality. No place can be empty of Him so that He may be pointed to at a certain space.

There is neither likeness nor a match for Him so that He may be described according to the fashion of that like or match. He has never been absent from any thing so that He may be known due to the knowledge with that thing. He is thus different from all the attributes that He created, He cannot be realized through the actions of identities that He fashioned (in the things), and He is beyond all the changes of states due to His grandeur and greatness.

It is definitely unattainable for the most brilliant and sagacious acumens to identify Him, for the most profound sagacity of intellects to distinguish the way He exists, and for the most reflective views to imagine Him. Spaces cannot embrace Him due to His greatness. Measures cannot appraise Him due to His majesty.

Criteria cannot weigh Him up due to His grandeur. It is impossible for illusions to fathom Him, for understandings to empathize Him, and for mentalities to represent Him. The most ambitious intellects have despaired of extracting the comprehension of Him. Oceans of knowledge have run out before being able to point to His Essence. The most subtle ideas of the rivals have retreated from sublimity to shortcoming in describing His power.

He is One, but not as a number. He is Eternal, but with no term. He is Self- subsisting, but with no pillar. He is not a species so that species may be equivalent to Him. He is not a ghost so that ghosts may keep pace with Him. He is not like the things so that attributes may be applicable to Him. All intellects have wandered in the waves of the currency of comprehending Him. Allusions have been too bewildered to apprehend the form of His sempiternity.

Understandings have been too restricted to feel the description of His power. Mentalities have sunk in the surges of the oceans of the orbits of His kingdom. He is All-powerful due to His elegances, Unbeatable due to His grandeur, and having supreme power over all things. No age can make Him old and no description can comprehend His real Entity. The necks of the difficulties have submitted themselves before Him in the climax of their powers. The sturdiest causes have succumbed to Him in the utmost of their high courses.

He used the variety of species as evidence on His Lordship, used the deficiency of these species as evidence on His all-powerfulness, used the origination of these species as evidence to prove that He is beginningless, and used the unavoidable extinction of them as evidence on His everlasting endurance.

It is then impossible for things to comprehend Him, impracticable for them to refrain from confessing of His comprehension of them, unavoidable for them to confess that He records the number of all things, and inescapable for them to admit His having power over them.

His excellently perfect making is a sufficient indication of His existence. His composing natures on the things He has made is sufficient sign of Him. The responsiveness of these things to the different manners is sufficient sign of His sempiternity. His dexterous making of the things is sufficient lesson (to be learnt).

There is no limit to be ascribed to Him, there is no parable to be set forth for Him, and there is nothing to be hidden from Him. High exalted is He from setting forth parables for Him and from ascribing created attributes to Him, in high exaltation.

All glory be to Allah Who created the world for perdition and extinction and created the Hereafter for endurance and perpetuity.

All glory be to Allah, nothing of what He gives abundantly can reduce what He has in possession, even though His gifts exceed all expectations and attain the utmost hope, and He never wrongs when He issues judgments.

All glory be to Allah Whose decrees are never refutable, Whose determinations are never warded off, Whose donations are never stopped, and Who never slips, forgets, or rushes; rather, He always grants respite, pardons, forgives, shows mercy, and acts patiently. He cannot be questioned concerning what He does, but they shall be questioned.

There is no god save Allah Who appreciates those who are obedient to Him, Who grants respite for those who set partners with Him (in His Godhead), Who is close to those who beseech Him despite His farness, and Who is benign and merciful to those who resort to His shade and hold fast to His rope.

There is no god save Allah Who responds to those who call on Him with their lowest voices, Who hears the words of those who speak to Him confidentially about their most hidden secrets, Who is kind to those who hope Him for relieving them from their distresses, and Who is nigh to those who supplicate Him for alleviating their agonies and grief.

There is no god save Allah Who is forbearing with those who deny His portents, stray off from His clear-cut demonstrations, and adopt for denying all of His states.

Allah is the Most Great; He is the conquering of all adversaries, the highly exalted above all peers, and the One and Only in conferring favors upon all of His servants.

Allah is the Most Great; He hides Himself with kingdom and almightiness, secludes Himself alone with omnipotence and power, and dresses Himself the dress of grandeur and greatness.

Allah is the Most Great; He is sacred due to the perpetuity of His authority, overcomes by means of the conclusive argument and the manifest proof, and enforces His will in every place and time.

O Allah, please send blessings upon Muhammad, Your servant and messenger, and grant him on this day the best of all means (of mediation), the most honorable donation, the most immense favors, the closest standing (to You), the happiest endowment, and the biggest delight of the eye.

O Allah, please send blessings upon Muhammad and upon the family members of Muhammad whom You ordered us to obey, from whom You removed filth, and whom You purified with thorough purifying.

O Allah, please send blessings upon Muhammad and upon the family members of Muhammad whom You inspired with Your knowledge and made the trustees of Your Books and the keepers over Your servants.

O Allah, please send blessings upon Muhammad, Your servant, messenger, prophet, intimately dear one, and friend; (he is) the chief of the past prophets and messengers and the past and coming generations of Your creatures, and (send blessings) upon his household, the pure and immaculate ones whom You ordered us to obey and You made obligatory upon us observing their rights and showing affection to them.

O Allah, I now beseech You the beseeching of one who is fearful of Your punishment and cautious of Your chastisement; one who has fled to You from You; one who does not find any other savior from his destitution than You and does not find any other security from his fear than Your court and Your bounties.

O my Master and Lord, even with my recurring disobedience to You, please cause my destination to be to You alone, although my sins have preceded me to You and stood between me and You. This is because You are the strongest support to Whom one who seeks support may resort and You are the best objective to Whom one who seeks objective may turn. Your donation of gifts never reduces You and the many requests from You never infuriate You. So, to You only do the grand favors and the enormous bounties belong.

O He Whose hoards are never decreased, Whose kingdom is never perishable, Who cannot be seen with eyes, and from Whom no single movement or stillness can be hidden! You always existed and You will be always existent. No thing that ensconces itself in the most fortified part of the earth, the sky, or the horizon can be hidden from You.

You have taken upon Yourself to provide Your creatures with provisions, O Bestower of all sustenance! You are too holy to be expressed by at-

tributes. You are too almighty to be comprehended by the terms of all languages.

You have never been transient so that You may be found moving from one state to another; rather, You are the Single, the First, the Last, the Lord of overwhelming might, the Ample in giving, the Donor of bursting bounties, and the Worthiest of excusing and pardoning the wrongdoers and those who misrepresent You in every tongue.

O my Lord, You alone deserve to be worshipped at nights wholly and in You alone trusts are put in hardships. So, all praise and all glory be to You, for You are the endless Master and the eternal Lord. As You fashioned all the creatures perfectly, You have had command of them through Your gentle management and appraisal.

You are too highly exalted in the elevation of Your affairs to be exposed to the power of changing, or to be under such a state due to which an atheist may ascribe to You a quality of alternation, or to be in such a state of increase and decrease due to which You may be believed to undergo the variation of transference, or to exist in such a way that the clouds of comprehending You may be wetted from the most profound ideas of the well-determined intellects, or to have a created quality through which the most premeditated thoughts may refer to You.

So, all praise be to You, O my Lord. All Your creatures have to succumb to You, since they find no other way than professing Your Lordship, confessing, and surrendering to their servitude to You.

All glory be to You! How superior Your affairs are! How high Your position is! How truthful Your proofs are! How effective Your decree is! How excellent Your management is! As You made the sky a canopy, You raised it high.

As You expanded the earth, You made it a resting-place and You then brought forth from it abundantly pouring water and flickering plants. So, the plants of the earth are praising Your glory and its waters are flowing by Your command; and both of them are standing on the resting-place of Your will as exactly as You have commanded them.

O He Who is Almighty through His perpetuity and Who overcomes His servants with perdition (that is unavoidably decided on them), please, receive me with honor, because You are the most favored resort for removing all harms.

O He Who is alone hoped in all hardships and Who is alone expected (to give more) in all comforts! Today, I put my request before Your Hands and to You alone do I pray humbly; so, please do not reject me with disappointment from what I have hoped from You and do not prevent my prayers from reaching You after You have allowed me to pray to You.

Please, send blessings upon Muhammad and his Household and provide me, out of Your expansive favor, with a part that is expansive, palatable, legally gotten, pleasant, enjoyable, wholesome, and delightful while I enjoy wellbeing.

O Allah, please make the day on which I will meet You to be the best of all of my days, forgive my wrongdoings because they are depriving me of all entertainments, and absolve my sins because they have destroyed me. Verily, You are Responsive, Acceptor of penitence, Preserving, Nigh, All- powerful, Forgiving, Overcoming, Merciful, Generous, and Self-subsisting; and to do all that to me is easy for You to do; and You are the best of all creators.

O Allah, You have imposed upon me some duties towards fathers and mothers and You then deemed these duties imperatively great. You are the worthiest of releasing from and alleviating the burdens (of sins) and the worthiest of fulfilling the duties on behalf of His servants.

So, please help me carry out my duties towards my parents, forgive them as well as every one who has besought You (for forgiveness), including all the believing men and women and all the brothers-in-faith and sisters-in-faith, attach them and us to the Pious Ones, and allow them and us to the gardens of Your Paradise with the Selects and the Righteous Ones. Verily, You are the Hearer of prayers. May Allah bless the Prophet Muhammad and his immaculate progeny and pour abundant benedictions on them! 35

Supplicatory Prayer On Unity And Magnificent Power Of Allah

The following supplicatory prayer is considered one of the most brilliant supplications of Imam Ali ('a) that comprises such superb statements of the magnificent power of Almighty Allah and His excellent creation of things:

All praise is due to Allah. There is no god but He, the Ever-living, the Self- Subsisting, the Eternal, the True, the Manifest King. He is the Administrator without any minister and without consultation with any of his slaves.

He is the First Who cannot be described. He is Eternal after the annihilation of all creatures. He is the greatest Cherisher, the Light of the heavens and the earth and their Creator and Maker out of nothing. He created both of them and separated them with a proper separation; the heavens hence became stable in obedience to His command and the earths became fixed on the surface of the water with their pegs. Then, our Lord subdued the high heavens, the All-beneficent, ruled from the Throne.

Everything that is in the heavens and in the earth, and in between them and what is below the earth belongs to Him. So, I bear witness that You are verily Allah; there is none to elevate what You may lower, none to lower what You may elevate, no one to exalt him whom You leave in disgrace, no one to bring into disgrace him whom You exalt, no one to prevent him upon whom You bestow Your favor, and no one to bestow anything which You may withhold.

You are Allah, there is no god but You; You existed when there was neither stable sky, nor broad earth, nor brilliant sun, nor dark night, nor bright day, nor vast ocean, nor stable mountain, nor revolving planet, nor luminous moon, nor blowing wind, nor raining cloud, nor flashing lightning, nor praising thunder, nor breathing soul, nor flying bird, nor blazing fire, nor flowing water.

You existed before the existence of all things, You created everything, had power over everything, and originated everything. You enriched some and reduced others to poverty, caused some to die and brought oth-

ers to life, and made some laugh and others weep. Verily, You rule from the Throne. Blessed and Exalted be You, O Allah. You are Allah save Whom there is no god; the Creator and Supporter.

Your Decree is overpowering, Your Knowledge is operative, Your strategy is wonderful, Your promise is fulfilled, Your saying is true, Your judgment is fair, Your words are right guidance, Your Revelation is light, Your mercy is all-inclusive, Your forgiveness is superb, Your grace is excessive, Your gift is most abundant, Your cord is strong, Your ability is ever ready, Your protege is supported, Your prowess is strong, and Your stratagem is entrapping.

You O my Lord, are the target of all complaints, the present in all gatherings, the witness of all confidential talks, the ultimate goal of all requests, the expeller of all sorrows, the affluence of every needy, the stronghold for every refugee, the security of every fearful, the shield of the weak, the treasure for the indigent, the destroyer of grief, and the helper of the righteous. Such is Allah, our Lord.

There is no god but He. You satisfy such of Your slaves as trust in You. You are the protector of him who has recourse to You and implore You, the haven of him who seeks Your haven, the supporter of him who looks up to You support, the forgiver of sins of him who begs Your forgiveness, the Compeller of the tyrants, the Most Grand of the grand, the Most Great of the great, the Master of masters, the Lord of lords, the Succor of the grieved, the Reliever of the aggrieved, the Responder to the calls of the distressed, the most hearing of the hearers, the most-seeing of all observers, the most just of all judges, the quickest in reckoning, the most merciful of all the merciful, the best of all forgivers, the satisfier of the needs of the faithful, and the succorer of the righteous.

You are Allah, there is no god but You, the Lord of the worlds. You are the Creator and I am a creature, You are the Master and I am a servant, You are the Lord and I am a slave, You are the Provider while I am provided with sustenance, You are the Giver while I am a beggar, You are the Generous while I am a miser, You are the Mighty while I am weak, You are the Noble while I am humble, You are the Independent while I

am needy, You are the Master while I am slave, You are the Forgiver of sins while I am sinful, You are the Omniscient while I am ignorant.

You are the forbearing while I am hasty, You are the All-Merciful and I lack mercy, You are the Healer but I am involved in suffering, and You are the Responding and I am the distressed. I bear witness that You are verily Allah, there is no god but You; You bestow favors upon Your slaves before they beseech You.

I bear witness that You are verily Allah, the One, the Peerless, the Unique, the Independent, the Single, and to You is the return. May the blessings of Allah be upon Muhammad and his Household, the immaculate and pure. Forgive my sins, keep my faults concealed, and extend to me Your special and bounteous sustenance.

O most Merciful of all those who show mercy! All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. Allah is the Sufficient to us and excellent Protector He is. There is neither might nor power but with Allah, the All-high, the All- great. 36

Supplicatory Prayer On Earnest Entreaty And Self-Humbling Before Allah

Imploring earnestly to Almighty Allah and humbling himself before Him, Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said the following supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, You are verily my God and I am Your servant. I believe in You sincerely and I commit myself to fulfilling the pledge and promise that I have made with You as much as I can. I repent to You from my evildoings and I implore for Your forgiveness of the sins that none can forgive save You. My humility is now seeking refuge with Your dignity. My poverty is now seeking refuge with Your richness. My impatience is now seeking refuge with Your forbearance.

My defenselessness is now seeking refuge with Your all-powerfulness. My fear is now seeking refuge with Your grant of security. My malady is now seeking refuge with Your remedy. My illness is now seeking refuge

with Your healing. My current situation is now seeking refuge with Your predetermined decree. My helplessness is now seeking refuge with Your ability. My sin is now seeking refuge with Your forgiveness. My terminable and mortal face is now seeking refuge with Your Face that is eternal, everlasting, imperishable, and interminable.

O He Whom cannot be concealed by the covering darkness of night, the skies along with their constellations, the thunderous murk, or what is in the bottom of the roaring oceans! O Repelling of the sways of calamities! O Reliever from agonies! O sender down of blessings from above seven skies! I beseech You, O Decider! O He in Whose Hands are the keys of all hoards!

I beseech You to bless Muhammad and the pure and immaculate Household of Muhammad, to open wide before me the entire welfare of this world and the other world, to stand between me and the one whom is given sway over me (i.e. Satan), not to give him free hand over me lest he will lead me to perdition, not to make me depend on myself even for the wink of an eye lest I will fail, not to deprive me of Paradise, to have mercy on me, to make me die as Muslim (i.e. surrendering to Your will), to join me with the righteous ones, and to make me dispense with the illegally gotten provisions through the legally gotten ones and with the worthless things through the good things, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy!

O Allah, You have created hearts to follow Your volition and framed intellects to recognize You. So, minds are shivering in fear of You and hearts are crying in passionate love for You. The scope of hearts, no matter how expansive it is, has fallen short to thank You as exactly as You deserve thanking. Words have fallen short to express the amount of Your excellent attributes. Tongues have fallen short to calculate Your graces.

Whenever they penetrate into the paths of searching for the most exact expression of describing You, they become astounded by the bewilderment of failing to comprehend Your depiction. Thus, they remain too short to trespass the limits You have decided for them, since they are not allowed to exceed what You have ordered them. As they can only whirl in the frame that You have put them in, they praise You for the borders You

have decided for them. Tongues are thus expanding to express only what You have dictated to them.

The duty towards You of every one of Your creatures that You have ordered to be servants of You is that they must not be weary of praising You, even if all expressions of praise are too short to thank You for all the graces that You have conferred upon them. Therefore, those who permanently praise You have exerted all their possible efforts in praising You. Those who fell short to carry out their duties towards You adequately have held fast by their expectation of Your pardon.

The fearful have conceived fear of Your Godhead. The seekers of Your bounties have turned their faces towards You with desire for You. The good-doers have ascribed their good deeds to Your favor (that You have conferred upon them and due to which they could do good acts). All of these are meanwhile shading themselves under the hope for Your pardon, humbling themselves in abatement before You in fear of You, and confessing of their failure to thank You as it should be.

However, the shunning of those who have shunned obeying You and the engagement of those who have engaged themselves in disobedience to You have not stopped You from conferring upon them abundant graces, giving them big shares (of Your sustenance), warding off misfortunes from them, warning them against the bad consequences that would bring them nothing but regret, doubling up the rewards for those who act kindly, imposing upon the good-doers thanking You for granting them the opportunity to do good acts, and upon the wrongdoers thanking You for Your kind turns stemming from Your favors, and promising the doers of kind acts with additional kind rewards from You.

All glory be to You! You give rewards for things whose commencement is from You, things that are originated by You, things that You give power to be done, things whose goodness is from none but You, and things that cannot be done unless their doers rely upon You in doing them. All praise be to You; the praise of one who knows for sure that all praise must be due to You and that its beginning is from You and its return is definitely to You. I praise You such praise that does not stop be-

fore attaining Your pleasure; the praise of one who aspires for You and accordingly deserves more graces from You.

O Allah, You have supporting matters from Your aid and mercy with which You immunize whomever of Your creatures that You wish (to immunize). So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and give us exclusive portions of Your mercy and of Your supporting matters from Your favors that are the most absolving (of our sins), the most protecting from loss, the most redeeming from perdition, the best guiding to the right path, the most defensive against misfortunes, the most abundant in donations of rewards, the most favorite in blessing-giving, the richest in shares of sustenance, the most profuse of graces, the most covering up of defects, the most concealing of the covertly done things, and the best guaranteeing of forgiveness of sins. Verily, You are Nigh and Responsive.

Please, bless the choicest of Your creatures, the most select from among Your beings, and the trustee on Your revelations (i.e. Prophet Muhammad) with the most favorite blessings and confer upon him with the best of Your benedictions, as a reward for his perfect conveyance of the messages, his declaration openly of what You ordered, his invitations for You, and his presenting the proofs of You with the most manifest truth until death came upon him. May Allah bless him among the past generations!

May Allah bless him among the last generations! May Allah bless his household and the immaculate members of his family! Please, represent him amongst them in the best way You have ever represented any of Your messengers, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy!

O Allah, You have determinations that no other willpower can ever stand against their achievement, because any willpower that opposes Your determinations are in fact too weak to oppose the issuance of these determinations not to mention their achievement.

If You, through one of Your determinations, have decide to pardon, or if You have made one of Your determinations to be a reason for attaining Your favors or bringing down welfare from You, then please bless

Muhammad and his Household, perpetuate such determination, and attach perfection to it. Verily, You are Ample in giving, Generous in donating, Responsive to the calls (for You), and Hearer of the prayers. 37

Supplicatory Prayer On Holding Allah In Holy Reverence

The following supplicatory prayer is one of the most distinguished and outstanding supplications of Imam Ali (‘a). It comprises such incomparable statements of paying holy reverence to Almighty Allah. It is reported that Imam Ali (‘a) dictated this supplicatory prayer to a man from the prominent and virtuous personalities of Yemen; therefore, it is famously known as du’a' Al-yamani (Supplication of the Yemeni):

O Allah, You are verily the true king save Whom there is no god. I, Your servant, have wronged myself and I am now confessing of my sins that none is worth forgiving them save You. So, please forgive me. O Oft-forgiving! O Multiplier of rewards!

O Allah, I praise You since You are the worthiest of being praised for what You have given me particularly from Your gifts that cover the desires, for what You have reached to me from Your ample favors, for what You have endued me from Your kind acts, for what You have achieved for me concerning my idea about Your justice, for what You have conferred upon me from Your turns that You attached to me, for defending me, for leading me to success, and for responding to my prayers whenever I spoke to You confidentially in supplication and supplicated You in states of grief.

Whenever I beseeched You, I found You setting aright all of my affairs under all circumstances, looking at me with the eye of mercy in all of my issues, forgiving all of my sins, and covering up all of my defects. I have never been deprived of Your prosperity even for a wink of an eye since You have brought me down to this abode of test so that You would see what I would send forth for myself for the enduring abode.

I am now Your manumitted slave whom You have manumitted from all misfortunes and calamities in the sticky hardships and the distresses due

to which anxieties jumped on me and afflicted upon me various kinds of hardships and countless varieties of exhausting adversities. I know about You nothing but nice turns and I see nothing from You but favoring. Your welfare to me is comprehensive, Your favors ceaseless, and Your graces connected to each other.

Very frequently, You have not let my anticipation come true; rather, You made my expectation come true. You have been my comrade in journeys, You have conferred honor upon me in my homeland, you have healed all my illnesses and tiresome ailments, You have wrapped my places of turmoil and rest with wellbeing from You, You have not allowed my enemies to gloat over my misfortunes, You have smitten those who had smitten me, and You have saved me from the burdens of my enemies.

So, my praise to You in uninterrupted and my thanks for You are timelessly moving from one age to another with a big variety of glorification of You, and sincerely aimed at remembering You and at attaining Your pleasure with the most ripened profession of Your Oneness and the purest glorification of You with the longest numeration (of the items of Your glory) and the way those who deserve more favors from You glorify You. You never require aid in Your all-powerfulness.

You have never been shared in Your Godhead. Your Essence is never known how it is, so that the various things may be similar to You. You can never be seen, since You have suspended all things on their instincts. Illusions have never been able to penetrate into the screens of the unseen so that they may form a defined idea about Your greatness. The height of the intellectual courage cannot appreciated You, nor can the diving of understanding reach You, nor can the view of any viewer catch a glimpse of You in the glory of Your splendor.

The attributes of Your omnipotence are high above the attributes of the created beings. The grandeur of Your greatness is highly exalted about that. What You decide to augment shall never diminish, and what You decide to diminish shall never augment. None witnessed You when You created the souls.

Illusions are too impotent to explain Your attributes, and intellects are too narrow to comprehend the reality of Your greatness. How can You be described when You are the Omnipotent, the All-sacred, and the One Who has incessantly been eternal and perpetual in the hidden worlds where nothing exists save You and nothing subsists save You?

The most profound methods of thinking are too perplexed to understand Your kingdom; therefore, kings humbled themselves before Your veneration, all faces debased with the humility of surrendering to You, all objects gave themselves over to Your greatness, all things relinquished for Your omnipotence, all necks are nodded down in reverence for You, and then any management for identifying Your attributes proved abortive. Whoever thinks deliberately about this, his sight returns to him confused and fatigued, his intellect astounded, and his intelligence confounded.

O Allah, all praise be to You; praise that is uninterrupted, consistent, and regular; praise that lasts forever and never terminates; praise that is never lost in the divine kingdom, never effaced in any feature, and never decreased in the recognition of You.

All praise be to You; praise whose nobilities cannot be counted; praise be to You in the night when it flees, in the morning when it manifests itself, in the lands and oceans, in the morns and eves, and in the noon and dawn.

O Allah, owing to the success to which You have led me, I have had desire for You and You have made me enjoy Your protection because of my loyalty to You to which You have guided me. I have thus been taking pleasure in Your abundant graces and successive elegances, guarded by You in Your invulnerability and defense, and surrounded by Your safeguard in my place of turmoil and place of rest.

You have never imposed upon me what is beyond the scope of my power, as You have accepted nothing from me save my obedience to You. However, my thanks for You even if I express them tremendously verbally and practically will never attain to the level of adequacy and will never recompense for Your favors, because You are Allah save Whom there is no other god. No hidden thing can ever be hidden from You, no concealed

matter can ever conceal itself from You, and no lost thing can ever be missed by You even if it is lost in the murk of the most mysterious spaces. Your command, when You intend anything, is only to say to it, 'Be!' So, it comes to be.

O Allah, all praise be to You; the same praise by which You have praised Yourself, and the same praise by which You are praised by those who incessantly praise You, those who glorify You, those who profess Your greatness, and those who profess Your magnitude.

I thus praise You with such praise that every single item of it that is as swift as a wink of an eye and even less than that will be resembling the praise of all those who praise You, the profession of Your Oneness that is professed by all of the various species of Your creatures that are sincere to You, the sanctification of all of the varieties of the gnostic ones, the thanking of all of those who profess that there is no god save You; and resembling the praise of all of Your beings that You alone know. I also desire for You to gain the reward of the praise that You have enabled me to expresst. How easy the duty that You have impose upon me is, but how great Your promised rewards for my thanks for You are!

Out of Your favoring and honoring, You have taken the initiative to confer Your graces upon me, ordered me to thank You for them although I have to thank You truly and fairly, promised to give me many folds and even more, provided me with Your provisions so that I may take lesson and regard Your favors, ordered me to give back a little and small amount of it (in charity and as alms), and promised to give me in recompense an abundant reward.

You have also released me from the tedious hardships and You have not left me alone with Your tribulations along with the wellbeing that You have granted me (due to which I have had the ability to undergo these hardships soundly) and the honoring donations with which You have bestowed me.

Then, You have doubled up Your favors to me although You have already put in me the ability to follow the straight path, made easy for me to attain the high and exalted rank (with You), and chosen me to follow the

greatest of all of Your prophets in invitation and the best of them in intercession; namely, Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his Household.

O Allah, please forgive me these sins that cannot be covered up by any other thing than Your forgiveness, cannot be cleared by any other thing than Your pardon, and cannot be atoned by any other thing than Your favor. On this day of mine, please grant me certitude by which You may alleviate the misfortunes and anguishes of this world that are afflicted upon me, by means of giving me yearning for You and desire for what You have in possession.

Please, put my name down in the list of Your forgiveness, make me achieve honor from You, and endue me with thanking You for the graces You have conferred upon me, for You are Allah the One, the Elevated, the Originator, the Fashioner, the All-hearing, and the All- knowing. There is nothing to repel Your decrees and there is nothing to deter from the realization of Your acts.

I bear witness that You are my Lord and the Lord of all things, You are the Originator of the heavens and the earth, the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Most High, and the Most Great.

O Allah, I beseech You for steadfastness on my affairs, determination on right guidance, and thanks for Your grace. I seek Your protection against the despotism of every unjust one, the transgression of every transgressor, and the envy of every envious one.

Through You only can I fall upon the enemies, and from You only do I hope for loyalty to the most cherished saints of You, not to mention the donations of Your favors, the varieties of Your sustenance, and the colors of Your endowments that I can neither calculate nor numerate, because You are Allah save Whom there is no god, Whose aids are widespread among the creatures, Whose Hand is stretched with magnanimity, Whose judgments can never be countered, and Whose decrees can never be rivaled. You possess from the created beings whatever You will to possess, but they can possess nothing but that which You want them to possess.

'Say: O Allah! Owner of Sovereignty! You give sovereignty to whom You will, and You withdraw sovereignty from whom You will. You exalt whom You will, and You abase whom You will. In Your Hand is the good. Lo! You are Able to do all things. You cause the night to pass into the day, and You cause the day to pass into the night. And You bring forth the living from the dead, and You bring forth the dead from the living. And You give sustenance to whom You choose, without stint.'

You are the All-benign, the Favorer, the Creator, the Maker, the All-powerful, the Overcoming, and the All-holy in the light of sacredness. You dress glory and almightiness, You are great due to Your grandeur, You are covered with light and brilliance, and You are enclosed with awe and sublimity.

O Allah, to You alone be the great praise, the eternal favoring, the inspiring authority, the liberal magnanimity, and the overpowering omnipotence, for You have made me one of the best descendants of Adam and You have made me able to hear, able to see, sound, unblemished, and enjoy wellbeing.

You have not preoccupied me with a defect in my physique. Your honoring me, Your good turns to me, and Your great favors to me have not stopped You from providing me with sufficient provisions in this world and from preferring me to many of the inhabitants of it (i.e. this world).

So, You have made for me the sense of hearing with which I can hear Your verses and You have given me an intellect that can recognize Your greatness. I thus praise You for these, out of Your favor to me (i.e. the favor of enabling me to thank You), thank You for them, out of my efforts (which are also from You), and bear witness to my duty towards You.

You are verily the Ever-living Who existed before all existent things, the Ever-living Who shall endure after the extinction of all existent things, the Ever-living Who has not inherited life from any existent thing. You have never stopped Your prosperity from reaching me even for a time that is as swift as a wink of an eye and all times unexceptionally. You have not wreaked upon me the penal chastisements.

You have not changed even the most minute item of Your protection of me. If I mention nothing of Your good turns except Your pardon, Your response to my prayers whenever I raised my head towards You with statements of praising and glorifying You, and Your giving me shares of Your sustenance when You measured, then all praise must be due to You; praise that is as copious as what Your knowledge retains, as abundant as what Your omnipotence envelops, and as expansive as what Your mercy embraces.

O Allah, please make perfect Your good turns to me for the rest of my lifetime in the same way as You did in my past lifetime. I thus beg You in the name of Your being One, Most Glorified, Most Praised, One and Only God, Most Great, Most Grand, Source of all light, Most Clement, Most Merciful, Most High, Most Splendid, Most Majestic, Most Brilliant, Owner of all authority, and Most Powerful, and in the name of Muhammad and his immaculate Household.

I beg You not to deprive me of Your donations and gifts, since the hindrances of misery never befall You, because of Your immense donating, the negligence in thanking Your graces never decreases Your magnanimity, and Your favors never consume the hoards of Your gifts. You never grudge for fear of fall to poverty, and fear of expiration never attaches You to make You reduce Your profuse blessings.

O Allah, please provide me with a submissive heart, a true certitude, and an oft-remembering tongue. Do not make me secure from Your scheme, do not remove Your covering from me, do not make me neglect remembering You, do not draw me away from Your vicinity, do not deprive me of Your entire mercy, and do not make me despair of Your comfort. Be my entertainment at every (situation of) loneliness, protect me, and save me from all tribulations. Verily, You never break Your promise.

O Allah, please raise me, but never lower me. Give me more, but never reduce Your gifts to me. Show me mercy, but never punish me. Grant me victory, but never disappoint me. Prefer me to all others, but never prefer others to me. Please, send blessings and very much benediction on Muhammad and his pure and immaculate Household. 38

Brief Supplicatory Prayer On Humbling Before Allah

Imam Ali ('a) says in supplication,

O Allah, You are the most attached to Your intimate servants and the most ready to assist those who trust in You. You see them in their concealments, know whatever is in their consciences, and are aware of the extent of their intelligence. Consequently, their secrets are open to You and their hearts are eager from You.

If loneliness bores them, remembering of You gives them solace. If distresses befall them, they beseech for Your protection, because they know that the reins of affairs are in Your hands, and that their movements depend upon Your commands.

O Allah, if I am unable to express my request or I cannot see my needs, then guide me towards my betterment and take my heart towards the correct goal. This is not against (the mode of) Your guidance nor anything new against Your ways of support.

O Allah, please deal with me through Your forgiveness and do not deal with me according to Your justice. 39

Supplicatory Prayer On Showing Humility Before Allah

The following supplicatory prayer comprises outstanding statements of showing humility before Almighty Allah:

O Allah! O He through Whose mercy sinners seek aid! O He to Whose beneficence the distressed flee! O He in fear of Whom the offenders weep! O Comfort of every lonely stranger! O Relief of all who are downcast and distressed! O Aid of everyone disappointed and alone! O Support of every needy outcast!

You are He Who embraces everything in mercy and knowledge! You are He Who has appointed for each creature a share of Your favors! You are He Whose pardon is higher than His punishment! You are He Whose mercy runs before His wrath!

You are He Whose bestowal is greater than His withholding! You are He Whose pardon embraces all the creatures! You are He Who desires no repayment from him upon whom He bestows! You are He Who does not overdo the punishment of him who disobeys You!

And, O my Lord, I am Your servant whom You commanded to supplicate and who thus said, 'I am at Your service and at Your disposal, O my Master! Here I am, O my Lord, thrown down before You. I am Your servant whose back offenses have weighed down! I am he whose lifetime sins have consumed! I am he who was disobedient to You due to his ignorance, while You did not deserve that from him! Will You.

O my Master, be merciful toward him who supplicates You, so that I shall bring my supplication before You painstakingly? Will You forgive him who weeps to You, so that I shall hurry to weep? Will You show forbearance toward him who puts his face in the dust before You in humility? Will You free him who complains to You of his indigent need with confidence?

O Allah, please, do not disappoint him who finds no bestower other than You, and do not abandon him who cannot dispense with You and depend on any other one.

O Allah, please, do not turn away from me when I have turned my face toward You, do not deprive me (of Your pardon) when I have besought You, and do not slap my brow with rejection when I have stood before You!

You are He Who has described Himself as merciful and You are He Who has named Yourself as pardoner; so, please have mercy upon me and pardon me. You have seen, O my Master, the flow of my tears in fear of You, the throbbing of my heart in dread of You, and the infirmity of my limbs in awe of You. All this is originated from my shame before You because of my evil deeds and from my shyness from You due to the numerous sins that I have committed. My tongue is thus too failing to speak to You confidentially and my voice is too muted to cry to You.

O My God, too many are my flaws that You have covered and thus You have not exposed me. Too many are my sins that You have cloaked and thus You have not made me notorious sinner.

Too many are the faults that I have committed; yet, You have not torn away from me their covering, You have not collared me with their detested disgrace, You have not demonstrated (before others) their unpleasant defects, You have not made their dishonor plain to those of my neighbors who search for my defects and to those who envy Your favors to me. Nevertheless, this did not make me stop committing these sins until I have committed eviler sins than these which You know from me!

So, O my God, who can be more ignorant than I am about Your leading to the right guidance?

Who can me more heedless than I am of his own good fortune that has been given by You?

Who can be further than I am from seeking to set himself aright, for I have spent the provision that You delivered to me in disobedience to You, which You have prohibited me to do?

Who sinks more deeply into falsehood than I am?

Who is more intensely audacious in evil than I am, for I have hesitated between Your call and the call of Satan, and then I have followed Satan's call without being blind in my knowledge of his reality or forgetful in my memory of him, while I am certain that Your call takes to Paradise while Satan's call takes to Hellfire?

All glory be to You! How strange the witness that I bear against my own soul is and how strange the enumeration of my own hidden affairs is!

However, what is even stranger than this is that You slow down in reproving me and You act forbearingly towards me! Yet, that is not because that I may possess honor with You, but because You wait patiently for me and You are bountiful toward me that I may refrain from disobey-

ing You and because to pardon me is more favorable to You than punishing me.

However, O my God, I am more numerous in sins, uglier in footsteps, more repulsive in acts, more reckless in rushing into falsehood, weaker in awakening to Your obedience, and less attentive and heedful toward Your threats than that I could number for You my faults or have the power to recount my sins. I only scold my own soul, craving for Your gentleness, through which the affairs of sinners are set aright, and hoping for Your mercy, through which the necks of the offenders are freed.

O Allah, this is my neck enslaved by sins; so, please release it through Your pardon. This is my back overloaded with offenses; so, please lighten it through Your kindness.

O Allah, were I to weep to You until my eyelids drop off, wail until my voice wears out, stand before You in obedience until my feet swell up, bow to You devotionally until my backbone is thrown out of joint, prostrate myself before You in submission until my eyeballs fall out, eat the dirt of the earth for my whole lifetime, drink the water of ashes until the end of my days, mention You through all of that until my tongue fails, and not lift my glance to the sky's horizons in shame before You, yet I would not merit through all of that the erasing of a single one of my evil deeds.

Even though You may forgive me when I merit Your forgiveness and pardon me when I deserve Your pardon, yet I have no title to that through what I deserve, nor am I worthy of it through merit, since what I deserve from You since my first act of disobedience to You is Hellfire. So, if You now punish me, You will then do me no wrong.

O my God, as You have shielded me with Your covering and not exposed me, waited patiently for me through Your generosity and not hurried to punish me, and shown me clemency through Your bounty and thus You have not changed Your favor upon me or muddied Your kindly acts toward me, so please have mercy on my drawn out pleading, my intense misery, and my evil situation.

O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Household, save me from acts of disobedience to You, employ me in obedience to You, provide me with excellent turning back to You, purify me through repentance, strengthen me through preservation from sin, set me aright through wellbeing, provide me with the sweet taste of forgiveness, make me the freedman of Your pardon, and write for me a security from Your displeasure.

Please, give me the good news of that in the immediate but not the deferred good news that I can recognize and make known to me therein a sign which I may clearly see. Verily, this will not constrain You in Your plenty and will not tire You in Your greatness. Verily, You have the power over all things. 40

Supplicatory Prayer On Submission And Yielding Before Allah

The following supplicatory prayer is one of the literary pieces in which Imam

Ali (‘a) shows submission and reverence to Almighty Allah:

O my God, if I praise you, then this will be due to Your gifts to me. If I glorify You, then this will be under Your will. If I beseech You, then this will be due to the power that You have given to me. If I declare that there is no god save You, then this will be due to the strength with which You have endued me. If I want to fix my eyes on something, then I must fix them on Your mercy. If I want to lower my gaze, then I lower it to see Your graces.

O my God, whoever is not preoccupied with remembering You by inclination to You and is not making his destination in all of his journeys draw him nearer to You, his life is in fact considered death for him, and his death will be source of regret for him.

O my God, the views of those who observe You attained seeing You through the secrets of hearts, and the hearings of those who can hear You are open wide enough to hear You through the innermost parts of their intellects. Then, their sights have not been deterred from what they wanted.

When the screens of inattentiveness that prevented them from seeing You were ripped apart, they dwelt in Your Light and respired Your breath. So, their hearts have become plantations of love for You, and their sights have become centers of Your power. And when You drew their souls nearer to Your Holiness, they sat in Your Name with the most reverent session and with the most submissive addressing.

Then, You received them with the reception of the compassionate, listened to them with the listening of the lenient, responded to them with the response of the intimate friends, and spoke to them as confidentially as close friends speak to each other.

So, please help me attain the position to which these people have reached, and do not leave any door unlocked between me and the kingdom of Your almightiness or any screen of inattentiveness unopened between me and You, so that You will lodge my soul in the midst of the light of Your Throne and grant it a position in the face of Your illumination. Verily, You have power over all things.

O Allah, how dreadful the road on which my hope for You does not accompany me is! How long the journey during which my expectation for You is not my guide is! Disappointed indeed is he who holds fast by any rope other than Yours. Weak indeed is he who leans on any post other than Yours. O He Who instructs those who have put their hopes in Him how to put their hopes in Him so that the distress of fear will detach them, please do not deprive me of the most righteous deeds.

Please, put me under the shield of those who have lacked any way out to redemption. How can the humility of poverty attach those who put their hopes in You, while You are too rich to be affected by the harms that the sinful bring about to themselves?

O my God, every sweetness comes to an end, but the sweetness of belief in You is ever increasing, because it is affixed to You. My heart has stretched out its hope for You; so, please make it taste the sweetness of Your making it attain what it has hoped from You. Verily, You have power over all things.

O my God, I beseech You with the beseeching of one who recognizes for sure that You are the source of each and every item of prosperity that a faithful believer must find, and I seek Your protection against every evil and seditious matter against which You have protected Your creatures that You love. Verily, You have power over all things.

O my God, I beseech You with the beseeching of a poor man who is confused where to put his hope; therefore, he cannot find any shelter or prop through which he can reach You, since the shelter and the prop are the only means that You have decided to take to You, to Your posts, and to Your ranks that You never cancel.

So, I beseech You by Your Name in which You presented Yourself to Your elite servants; therefore, they professed Your Unity and recognized You as truly as You are, [I beseech You] to make me recognize You so that I will admit Your Lordship according to the true way of believing in You.

O my God, please, do not make me of those who worship the Name but not the meaning (of it); rather, send upon me one of Your views through which You fill in my heart with the illumination of recognizing You in a special way and recognizing Your true saints. Verily, You have power over all things. 41

Supplicatory Prayer On Devoutness And Humble Entreaty To Allah

Imam Ali ('a) used to pray to Almighty Allah with the following words:

O Allah, I praise You and You are the worthiest to be praised for Your excellent acts to me, Your permanent compassion towards me, Your light to which You have attached me, Your mercy that You have assigned to me, and Your favors that You have conferred upon me abundantly.

You, O my Master, have done to me good turns due to which it becomes incumbent on me to dedicate all of my efforts to You and [it becomes incumbent upon me] to thank You for Your nice pardoning, Your eternal

kindness to me, Your consecutive graces that You are pouring on me, and Your successive bestowals that You are transferring to me. Although I have not attained the rank for which I may deserve what You are presenting to me and I have not achieved self-reformation, You.

O my Lord, have taken the initiative to covering me with Your kindness. You therefore guided me to Your religion, introduced Yourself to me, and made me stand steadfastly all of the hardships that inflicted me, by means of Your redemption and good turns. So, You saved me from the tiresome tribulations and prevented the cautious acts from reaching me. I remember from You nothing but kind acts and I see from You nothing but favors.

O my God, too many are the tribulations and troubles that You have fended off from me and made me see how these tribulations affected other people. Too many are the graces by which You gave me delight of the eye. Too many are the excellent acts that You have done to me.

O my God, It is You Who respond to my prayers when I am distressed. It is You Who relieve me from agonies when sorrows attack me. It is You Who take vengeance on my enemies when they wrong me. I have never, and I will never find You away from me whenever I need You, or find You giving no answer to me whenever I beseech You, or find You turning away from me whenever I pray to You.

O my God, Your acts to me are always praiseworthy, Your excellent deeds with me are always effective, and Your exploits with me are always nice. Praising You are my tongue, my intellect, my limbs, and all the parts of my body that the earth carries.

O my Master, I beseech You in the name of Your Light that You derived from Your greatness and in the name of Your greatness that You derived from Your will, and I beseech You by Your Name that is highly exalted, to grant me the favor of thanking You as adequately as it is incumbent upon me.

O Lord, how caring I am for what You have encouragingly ordered me to forsake. If You do not help me act ascetically in the affairs appertained to

this world and act piously in the issues appertained to the other world, I will certainly expose myself to perdition.

O Lord, when the seductive harvests of this world, such as women and children, called on me, I responded to them without hesitation and inclined towards them obediently; but when the heralds of the other world, such as asceticism and painstaking work for You, invited me, I stumbled and I did not rush to them in the same way as I have rushed to the inactive wreckage, the mortal straw, and the swiftly transient mirage (of the world).

O Lord, You have warned me (against disobedience to You), awaken my desires (for Your rewards), and provided overwhelming arguments against me; yet, I have not feared You as You should be feared. I now fear lest I have slowed in working for You and I have been careless to any part of Your suspension (of punishing me).

O Allah, please make all of my efforts in this world to be sincerely dedicated to You and to obedience to You, fill my heart with fear of You, change my slowness, negligence, carelessness, and whatever I fear for myself into dread of You, steadfastness in obeying You, and working towards You, O Lord of majesty and honoring! Please, make my shield against wrongdoing invulnerable and the rewards for my good deeds multipliable, for You verily give increase manifold to whom You will.

O Allah, make my ranks in Paradise high. I seek Your protection, O my Lord, against excessive eating and drinking. I seek Your protection, O my Lord, against the evil of what I know and the evil of what I do not know. I seek Your protection from all indecencies, both the apparent and the hidden.

I seek Your protection lest I purchase ignorance with knowledge, just as some others do, or purchase intolerance with forbearance, or purchase impatience with patience, or purchase straying off with true guidance, or purchase disbelief with belief. O Lord, please confer that upon me, for You befriend the righteous ones and You never waste the wages of the good-doers. All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. 42

Du’a' Kumayl

One of the most illustrious supplicatory prayers of Imam Ali (‘a) is the one known as Du’a' Kumayl (The Supplication of Kumayl), because Kumayl reported it from Imam Ali (‘a) who used to say it at the nights of mid- Sha’ban. Imam Ali (‘a) then dictated the statements of the supplication to Kumayl.

The supplication is characterized by delicate style, charming phrases, and elegant diction. It also comprises the most wonderful pictures of submission and humbleness before Almighty Allah.

Faithful believers have devoted themselves to reciting this supplicatory prayer on Friday nights. Because of the important topics of the supplication, it has been translated into many languages. Besides, many scholars have written books comprising commentaries on this supplication. However, the most important of these books may be the one entitled aswa' ‘Ala du’a' kumayl by His Eminence Sayyid ‘Izz Al-Din Bahr Al-’Ulum.

Du’a' Kumayl reads as follows:

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. O Allah, I ask You by Your mercy, which embraces all things, by Your strength, through which You dominate all things toward which all things are humble, and before which all things are lowly, by Your invincibility through which You overwhelm all things, by Your might, which nothing can resist, by Your tremendousness, which has filled all things, by Your authority, which towers over all things, by Your face, which subsists after the annihilation of all things, by Your Names, which have filled the areas of all things, by Your knowledge, which encompasses all things, and by the light of Your Face, through which all things are illumined! O Light! O All-holy! O First of those who are first and Last of those who are last!

O Allah, forgive me those sins which tear apart safeguards! 43 *O Allah, forgive me those sins which draw down adversities!* 44 *O Allah, forgive*

me.

When people break their promises, Allah will give their enemies those sins which alter blessings! 45 *O Allah, forgive me those sins, which hold back supplication!* 46 *O Allah, forgive me those sins, which cut down hopes!* 47 *O Allah, forgive me those sins which draw down tribulation).* 48

O Allah, forgive me every sin I have committed and every mistake I have made!

O Allah, verily I seek nearness to You through remembrance of You, I seek intercession from You with Yourself, and I ask You in the name of Your munificence to bring me near to Your proximity, to provide me with gratitude toward You, and to inspire me with Your remembrance.

O Allah, verily I ask You with the asking of a submissive, abased, and lowly man to show me forbearance, to have mercy on me, and to make me satisfied and content with Your appointment and humble in every state.

O Allah, I ask You the beseeching of one whose indigence is extreme, who has stated to You in difficulties his need, and whose desire for what is with You has become great.

O Allah, Your authority is tremendous, Your place is lofty, Your plan is hidden, Your command is manifest, Your domination is overwhelming, Your power is unhindered and escape from Your governance is impossible.

O Allah, I find no forgiver of my sins, nor concealer of my ugly acts, nor transformer of any of my ugly acts into good acts but You been audacious in my ignorance, and depended upon Your eternal good turn to me and Your favor toward me.

O Allah! O my Protector! Too many are the ugly things You have concealed! Too many are the burdensome tribulations You have abolished! Too many are the stumbles You have prevented! Too many are the or-

deals You have repelled! Too much is the beautiful praise, of which I was unworthy, You have spread abroad!

O Allah, my tribulation is tremendous, my bad state is excessive, my acts are inadequate, my fetters have tied me down, my far-fetched hopes have held me back from my gain, this world has seduced me with its delusions, and my own soul and delay with its offences.

O my Master! So, I ask You by Your might not to let my evil works and acts veil my supplication from You, not to disgrace me through the hidden things You know of my secrets, not to hasten punishment to me for what I have done in private, such as my evil acts in secrecy and my misdeeds, my continuous negligence, my ignorance, my manifold passions, and my forgetfulness.

By Your might, O Allah, be kind to me in all states, and be gracious to me in all affairs! O my God and Lord! Whom do I have other than You from whom to ask removal of my affliction and regard for my affairs?

My God and Protector! You put into effect through me a decree in which I followed the caprice of my own soul and I did not remain wary of adorning my enemy. So, he deluded me through my soul's caprice and therein destiny favored him.

So, in what was put into effect through me in that situation, I transgressed some of Your statutes and disobeyed some of Your commands. So, Yours is the argument against me in all of that and I have no argument in what Your destiny put into effect through me therein nor in what Your decree and Your test imposed upon me.

Now, I have come to You, My God, after my shortcoming and immoderation toward myself, proffering my excuse, regretful, broken, apologizing, asking forgiveness, repenting, acknowledging, submissive, and confessing. I find no place to flee from what I have shown nor any place of escape to which I may turn in my affairs other than Your acceptance of my excuse and Your entering me into the compass of Your mercy.

O Allah, so accept my excuse, have mercy upon the severity of my affliction, and release me from the tightness of my fetters.

My Lord, have mercy upon the weakness of my body, the thinness of my skin, and the frailty of my bones. O You Who gave rise to my creation, to the remembrance of me, to the nurture of me, to goodness toward me, and to nourishment on me! (please) Bestow upon me for the sake of Your having given rise [to me] with generosity and Your previous goodness to me!

O my God, Master, and Lord! Will You torment me with Your fire after I have professed Your Unity, and after the knowledge of You my heart has embraced, the remembrance of You my tongue has constantly mentioned, the love of You to which my mind has clung, and the sincerity of my confession and my supplication, humble before Your lordship?

Far be it from You! You are too generous to squander him whom You have nurtured, banish him whom You have brought nigh, drive away him whom You have given an abode, or submit to tribulation him whom You have saved and shown mercy.

Would that I knew, my Master, God, and Protector! Will You give the Fire dominion over faces fallen down prostrate before Your Tremendousness, over tongues voicing sincerely the profession of Your Unity and giving thanks to You in praise, over hearts acknowledging Your Divinity through verification, over minds encompassing knowledge of You until they have become humble, over organs speeding to the places of Your worship in obedience and beckoning for Your forgiveness in submission? No such opinion is held of You nor has such been reported thanks to Your bounty concerning You.

O All-generous! My Lord! You know my weakness before a little of this world's tribulations and punishments, and before those ordeals which befall its inhabitants, even though it is a tribulation and ordeal whose stay is short, subsistence is little, and period is fleeting.

How can I then endure the tribulations of the next world and the great ordeals that occur within it? It is a tribulation whose period is long, sta-

tion endures, and sufferers are given no respite, since it only occurs as a result of Your wrath, vengeance, and anger, which cannot be withstood by the heavens and the earth.

O Master, so what about me? For I am Your weak, lowly, base, wretched, and miserable slave.

My God! My Lord! My Master! My Protector! For which things would I complain to You? For which of them would I lament and weep? For the pain and severity of chastisement? Or for the length and period of tribulation?

So, if You take me to the punishments with Your enemies, gather me with the people of Your tribulation, and separate me from Your friends and saints, then suppose My God, Master, Protector, and Lord that I am able to endure Your chastisement, how can I endure separation from You? Suppose that I am able to endure the heat of Your fire, how can I endure not gazing upon Your generosity?

How can I dwell in the Fire while my hope is Your pardon? So by Your might, my Master and protector, I swear sincerely, if You leave me with speech, I will lament to You from the midst of the Fire's inhabitants with lamentation of the hopeful, I will cry to You with the cry of those crying for help, I will weep to You with the weeping of the bereft, and I will call to You: Where are You, O Sponsor of the believers, O Goal of the hopes of those who yearn for recognizing You, O Aide of those who seek assistance, O Friend of the hearts of the sincere, O God of all the world's inhabitants!

Will You Glory be to You O My God, and Yours is all praise hear therein the voice of a slave surrendered to You, imprisoned there because of his violations, tasting the favor of its torment because of his disobedience, and confined within its layers because of his sin and crime, while he laments to You with the lament of one hopeful for Your mercy, calls to You with the tongue of those who profess Your Unity, and entreats You by Your lordship!

My Protector, so how should he remain in the chastisement while he has hope for Your previous clemency? How should the Fire cause him pain while he expects Your bounty and mercy? How should its flames burn him while You hear his voice and see his place? How should its groaning encompass him while You know his weakness?

How should he be convulsed among its levels while You know his sincerity? How should its keepers torture him while he calls out to You, O Lord? How should he have hope for Your bounty in freeing him from it while You abandon him therein? Far be it from You! That is not what is expected from You nor what is well-known of Your bounty, nor is it similar to the goodness and kindness You have shown to those who profess Your Unity.

So, I declare with certainty that were it not for what You have decreed concerning the chastisement of Your deniers and what You have foreordained concerning the everlasting home of those who stubbornly resist, You would make the Fire, entirely, coolness and safety, and no one would have a place of rest or abode within it.

But You holy are Your Names have sworn that You will fill it with the unbelievers, both jinn and men together, and place those who stubbornly resist therein forever. Moreover, You majestic is Your eulogy said at the beginning and were gracious through kindness as a favor: 'What? Is he who has been believer like him who has been ungodly? They are not equal.'

My God and Master! So I ask You by the power You have apportioned, the decision You have determined and imposed and through which You have overcome him toward whom it has been put into effect, that You forgive me in this night and at this hour every offence I have committed, every sin I have performed, every ugly thing I have concealed, and every folly I have enacted whether I have hidden, announced, concealed, or manifested it, every evil act which You have commanded the noble writers to record, those whom You have appointed to watch over what appears from me, whom You have made, along with my organs, witness against me, and You were the Watcher over me from behind them and the Witness of what is hidden from them, but through Your mercy You

concealed it, and through Your bounty You veiled it, bestow upon me an abundant share of every good You end down, kindness You confer, goodness You unfold, provision You spread out, sin You forgive, or error You cover up.

My Lord! My Lord! My Lord! My God! My Master! My Protector! Owner of my bondage! O He in Whose Hand is my forelock! O He Who knows my affliction and my misery! O He Who is aware of my poverty and indigence!

My Lord! My Lord! My Lord! I beseech You in the name of Your Truth, Holiness, and the greatest of Your Attributes and Names, to make my times in the night and the day inhabited by Your remembrance, and joined to Your service, and to make my works acceptable to You, so that my works and litanies may all be a single litany, and my occupation with Your service everlasting.

My Master! O He upon Whom I depend! O He to Whom I complain about my states!

My Lord! My Lord! My Lord! Strengthen my organs in Your service, fortify my ribs in determination, bestow upon me earnestness in my fear of You and continuity in my being joined to Your service so that I may move easily toward You in the fields of the foremost, hurry to You among the prominent, desire fervently Your proximity among the fervently desirous, move nearer to You with the nearness of the sincere, fear You with the fear of those who have certitude, and gather with the believers in Your vicinity.

O Allah, whoever desires evil for me, desire [it] for him! Whoever deceives me, deceive him! Make me one of Your most excellent slaves in portion in Your decree, the nearest of them in station to You, and the most elected in proximity to You, for that cannot be attained except by Your bounty.

Grant generously to me through Your munificence, incline toward me with Your splendor, protect me with Your mercy, make my tongue remember You without ceasing and my heart enthralled by Your love, be

gracious to me by answering me favorably, nullify my slips, and forgive my lapses! For You have decreed Your worship for Your servants, commanded them to supplicate You, and assured them that they would be answered.

So, toward You, O my Lord, I have turned my face, and toward You, O my Lord, I have extended my hand. So, in the name of Your might, respond to my supplication, make me attain my desires, do not severe my hoping for Your favors, and spare me the evil of my enemies from among the jinn and men!

O He Whose pleasure is quickly achieved, forgive him who owns nothing but supplication, for You do what You will. O He Whose Name is a remedy, Whose remembrance is a cure, and Whose obedience is wealth, have mercy upon him whose capital is hope and whose weapon is tears!

O Ample in blessings! O Repelling of adversities! O Light of those who are lonely in the darkness! O Knower Who was never taught! Bless Muhammad and Muhammad's household, and do to me what is worthy of You! May Allah bless His Messenger and the holy Imams of his household, and give them abundant peace! 49

Supplicatory Prayers Attached To The Devotional Rituals

Imam Ali (‘a) paid much attention to supplicating Almighty Allah during performing the devotional rituals. As his heart was full of love for Almighty Allah, the Imam’s most favorite times were definitely the times of performing and offering the religious obligatory and recommended acts. Let us now present his supplicatory prayers that are attached to these devotional rituals:

Ritual Ablution

The ritual ablution (wuzu') is one of the obligatory introductions to the performance of the prayers whose acceptance is contingent

upon performing the ablution as accurately as prescribed by Almighty Allah.

When it precedes an obligatory prayer, the ritual ablution is obligatory, but it may be recommended when it is performed with the intention of attaining the state of ceremonial purity. The ritual ablution consists of a number of recommended and obligatory acts. Upon performing every single act of the ritual ablution, Imam Ali (‘a) used to say a definite supplicatory prayer, as follows:

Rinsing Out The Mouth

Upon rinsing out the mouth with a handful of water three time,[50] Imam Ali (‘a) would say each time this supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, (please) make me receive my proof on the Day when I will meet You, and cause my tongue to be eloquent with mention of You. [51]

Inhaling Water From The Nose

Upon inhaling water from the nose,[52] Imam Ali (‘a) used would say this supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, do not ban me from (smelling) the scent of Paradise; rather, make me of those who smell its scent, nice breathe, and fragrance. [53]

Washing The Face

Upon starting washing his face as obligatory part of the ritual ablution, Imam Ali (‘a) would say this supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, (please) whiten my face on the day when faces will turn black and do not blacken my face on the day when (other) faces will turn white. [54]

Washing The Right Hand

Upon washing his right hand, which is within the obligatory acts of the ritual ablution, Imam Ali (‘a) would say:

O Allah, (please) give me my Record (of deeds) in my right hand and immortality in the gardens of Paradise in my left hand, and make me take my account by an easy reckoning. 55

Washing The Left Hand

Upon washing the left hand, Imam Ali (‘a) would say this supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, do not give me my Record of Deeds in my left hand nor from my back; and do not cause my hand to be chained to my neck. I also pray Your protection against the severing flames of Hellfire. 56

Rubbing The Head With Water

When Imam Ali (‘a) would rub his head with water as an obligatory act of the ritual ablution, he would say this supplication:

O Allah, (please) overshadow me with Your mercy, blessings, and pardon.57

Rubbing The Feet With Water

When the Imam (‘a) would rub his feet with water as the last obligatory act of the ritual ablution, he would say this supplication:

O Allah, (please) make me stand firm on the Discriminating Bridge (sirat) on the day when many feet will slip and cause all of my efforts to be in what brings about Your satisfaction with me. O Lord of Majesty and Honoring! 58

The Ritual Prayer

Prayer is the pillar of the religion and the offering of the pious. Imam Ali (‘a) was passionately fond of offering prayers under all conditions. He used to offer all the supererogatory prayers. At the most horrible night of the Battle of Siffin, he offered a prayer in the center of the battlefield while arrows were overtaking him from both sides. When one of his companions criticized him for that, the Imam (‘a) answered,

We are fighting these people for nothing but the performance of the prayers.

Historicists state that Imam Ali (‘a) used to offer prayer in most of the times of his lifetime regularly.

Describing Imam Ali’s prayers, Imam Zayn Al-’Abidin (‘a), who was known for his unparalleled devotion and piety, is reported to have said,

There is no way to compare my devotion to the devotion of my grandfather Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Let us now present some supplications that Imam Ali (‘a) used to say bfore, during, and after the ritual prayers:

Supplication Before Entering Into Prayers

Just before uttering the takbirat Al-ihram statement,[59] Imam Ali (‘a) would say this supplicatory prayer:

O Munificent, I the wrongdoer have come to You. As You have ordered the munificent ones to overlook the wrongdoers, and as You are the All-munificent while I am a wrongdoer, so please, in the name of Muhammad and his Household, bless Muhammad and his Household and overlook the hideous deeds that You know about me. [60]

Supplication In The Prostration Of Prayers

The best part of a ritual prayer is the prostration. A tradition has it that in the posture of prostration, a servant is in the closest state to Almighty Allah.

In this connection, Imam Ali (‘a) used to say a number of supplicatory prayers while he prostrated himself before the Lord. Let us now refer to some of these supplications:

(1) Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah has reported that Imam Ali (‘a) used to say this supplicatory prayer in his prostrations:

I am speaking to You, O my Master, as confidentially as a humble servant speaks to his lord. I ask from You just like the asking of one who knows for sure that You always give and that no request can reduce any amount of what You have in possession. I implore for Your forgiveness just like the imploration of one who knows for sure that none can forgive the sins except You. I put my trust in You just like the putting of one who knows for sure that You have power over all things. 61

(2) Imam Ja’far Al-Sadiq (‘a) reported that his grandfather, Imam Ali (‘a), used to say this supplicatory prayer in prostration:

O Allah, I pray for Your protection against that You may put me to a test due to which I may pollute myself with any act of disobedience to You. O Allah, please do not make me need any of Your evil and lowly creatures. If You decide to make me need someone, then please make my need to be for the most receptive, the most well-mannered, the most handsome, the most magnanimous (in meeting my need), the most expressive, the most liberal, and the least to put me under obligation for meeting my need. 62

(3) Imam Ali (‘a) is also reported to have said this supplicatory prayer regularly in prostrations:

O Allah, (please do) have mercy on my humiliation before You, on my earnest imploring to You, on my loneliness among people, and on my

amiability with You. O All-generous! Verily, I am Your servant and I can move only under Your control. O Lord of favoring, graces, magnanimity, richness, and honoring, please have mercy on my weakness and old age against Hellfire, O All-generous! 63

The Post-Prostration Supplication

'Adi ibn hatam Al-ta'i reports:

One day, I visited Imam Ali ('a) and found him standing up in a prayer while he was pale out of reverence. Except for the Messenger of Allah (S), I have never seen any other person offering more prayers that Imam Ali ('a). I then moved towards him. When he felt my coming towards him, he made a signal for me, ordering me to stop at my place.

Then, the Imam ('a) offered a two- unit prayer briefly. Upon accomplishment, he prostrated himself for such a considerable time that I thought that he had fallen to sleep. When he raised his head from prostration, I could hear him saying this supplication:

There is no god save Allah, indeed, indeed. There is no god save Allah, (a sign of) having faith in and giving credence to Him. There is no god save Allah, (a sign of) worshipping and serving Him. O He Who grants honor to the believers through His authority! O He Who humiliates the potentates through His greatness!

You are my haven when I fail to find any course to follow and when calamities afflict me, causing the expansive earth to be narrow in my sight. You, O my Master, created me as mercy that You have shown to me. Had it not been for Your mercy (to me), I would certainly have been of the perishing ones. You are my supporter with victory over my enemies. Had it not been for Your support, I would certainly have been of the overcome ones.

O He Who originates blessings from their centers and sends mercy from its essence! O He Who takes exclusive possession of dignity and exalta-

tion; therefore, His saints are dignified due to His dignity! O He Who puts the riddle of humility on the necks of the kings; therefore, they are fearful of His sway!

I beseech You in the name of Your grandeur that You have derived from Your greatness, and in the name of Your greatness by which You have had full domination over Your Throne and by which You have raised high above all Your creations; therefore, all of them are submissive and humble before Your dignity; please, send blessings upon Muhammad and his Household and do to me one of the two things that You are worthiest to do. Blessed be You, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy. 64

Supplication In The Dawn Prayers

Imam Ali ('a) used to perform the ritual Dawn Prayer in the mosque known as Masjid Bani-Kahil. In the Qunut,65 he used to say this supplication:

O Allah, we do seek Your help, implore You for forgiveness, pray You for guidance, believe in You, put our trust in You, pay tribute to You for the entire prosperity (enjoyed by us), and disavow and renounce anyone who denies You.

O Allah, You alone do we worship, to You alone do we pray and prostrate, towards You alone do we go and rush, for Your mercy alone do we hope, and Your punishment do we fear, for, verily, Your punishment is always encompassing the disbelievers.

O Allah, please guide us among those whom You have guided, grant us wellbeing among those whom You have granted wellbeing, befriend us among those whom You have befriended, bless for us all that which You give to us, protect us from the evils of what You have decided, for, verily, You decree, but no one can decree against Your decrees. Verily, He whom You befriend shall never face humiliation. He whom You antagonize shall never find dignity.

Our Lord, blessed and exalted be You. I implore for Your forgiveness and I declare repentance before You. Our Lord, do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden as You did lay on those before us. Our Lord, do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear. Pardon us, grant us protection, and have mercy on us. You are our Patron; so, help us against the unbelieving people. 66

Supplication After The Dawn Prayers

Before it dawned, Imam Ali ('a) used to hurry to the Prophet's Mosque, when he lived in Al-Madinah, and to the Al-Kufah Mosque, when he moved to Al- Kufah, to offer the nocturnal devotional acts, such as the ritual Night Prayer and the other supererogatory prayers.

Upon accomplishment, he ('a) used to say words that express praise, glorification, and exaltation of Almighty Allah. Immediately after the obligatory Dawn Prayer, he used to say the following supplicatory prayer that he also used to say whenever he was concerned. Following him, the Holy Imams ('a) used to say the supplicatory prayers regularly:

O Allah, I beseech you, O He Who overtakes the fugitive! O He Who is the haven of the fearful! O He Who is the aide of those appealing for aid!

O Allah, verily I beseech You in the name of the situations of Your Dignity, in the name of Your utmost mercy in Your Book, and in the name of Your Name the great, the All-great, the grand, the All-grand, the pure, the All- pure, the sacred, the blessed: 'And if all the trees in the earth were pens, and the sea, with seven more seas to help it, were ink, the words of Allah could not be exhausted. Lo! Allah is Mighty, Wise.'

O Allah! O my Cherisher! 67 *O my Lord! O He Who is the utmost of my desire! O He! O He Who is He! O He Whom none knows who He is except Him and none knows how He is except Him! O Lord of majesty, honoring, favoring, and bestowal of graces! O Possessor of dominion and*

kingdom! O Lord of almightiness, grandeur, greatness, and invincibility! O He Who is ever-living and Who never dies!

O He Who is exalted and thus He dominates! O He Who is High and thus He exercises power! O He Who is worshipped and yet He appreciates! O He Who is disobeyed and yet He covers up! O He Whom cannot be comprehended by intellects! O Provider of the human beings (with sustenance)! O He Who fashions the predetermined acts! O He Who reckons the number of the raindrops!

O He Who is permanently Enduring! O He Who causes plants to grow! O He Who grants the requests! O He Who gives success to the appeals! O He Who sends forth the blessings! O He Who gives life to the dead! O He Who raises the ranks! O He Who has mercy on the teary eyes! O He Who frees from slips! O He Who removes the agonies! O He Who is the Light of the earth and the heavens!

O He Who associates every stranger! O He Who is always present that He is never absent! O He Who entertains every lonely one! O He Who is the shelter of every runaway! O He Who shows mercy to the old aged! O He Who shields the fearful who seek refuge! O He Who gives riches to the miserable and the poor! O He Who releases the solicitous prisoners! O He Who does not require explanation! O He Who is All-aware of all things!

O He Who has full power over all things! O He Who is exalted in place! O He Who is strong in pillars! O He Who has no interpreter! O He Who is the most excellent helper! O He Who is eternal in doing favors! O He Who in a state every day! O He of Whom no place is empty! O Most Magnanimous of all those who act magnanimously! O Most Generous of all those who act generously! O Most Hearing of all those who can hear! O Most Seer of all those who can see!

O Swiftest of all those who reckon! O Patron of the believers! O Help of those who put their trusts in Him! O Backer of those who seek refuge with Him! O Aide of those who seek aid from Him! O Supporter of those who seek support from Him!

O Lord of all lords! O Originator of all reasons! O Opener of all doors! O He Who manumits all slaves! O He Who raises the heavy clouds! O most liberal Bestower! O Acceptor of all repentances! O He Who responds wherefrom He is supplicated! O Cleaver of the daybreak! O He Who resurrects all souls!

O He in Whose Hand are all keys! O He Who gives blessings abundantly! O He Who repels all punishments! O Fashioner of all spirits! O He Who will gather all nations! O Lord of magnanimity and honoring! O He Who is the support of him who lacks support! O He Who is the prop of him who lacks prop!

O He Who is the might of him who wants might! O He Who is the shelter of him who lacks shelter! O He Who is the aide of him who is aidless! O Opulent in donation! O Excellent in extolment! O Forbearing Who does not make haste! O All-knowing Who never misses anything! O Magnanimous Who is never stingy! O Nigh Who is never inattentive! O my companion in my loneliness! O my means in my hardships!

O my haven when I fail to follow any course, when my relatives disappoint me, and when all of my friends give me up! O my hope in conditions of constriction! O my strong support! O my God truly and confirmedly! O Lord of the Ancient House!

O All-clement! O All-lenient! Please, save me from what I can do and what I cannot, release me from the narrow rings and send me to Your close relief, and defend me against what has concerned me and what will concern me from the affairs of this world and the other world, in the name of Your mercy, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy. [68]

Imploration For Forgiveness After The Dawn Prayers

Upon accomplishing the obligatory Dawn Prayers, Imam Ali (‘a) used to implore Almighty Allah for forgiveness using this seventy-paragraph supplication:

(1) O Allah, I praise You although through Your assistance to me I can praise You for the rewards that I will win from You as recompense for my praising You. I confess before You against myself to my lack to do what You deserve from me because of my ill intention and weak certitude.

O Allah, You are the most excellent God and the most excellent Lord, but I am the worst servant! You are the most excellent Cherisher, but I am the worst slave of You! You are the most excellent Master, but I am the worst serf! Very frequently have I committed sins, but You have always pardoned me. Very frequently have I committed crimes, but You have always excused me. Very frequently have I made wrongdoings, but You have not punished me for them.

Very frequently have I challenged You, but You have always absolved me. Very frequently have I slipped, but You have always overlooked my slips and You have not censured me. So now, I have wronged myself, confessed of my sins, and admitted my wrongdoings! O Forgiver of all sins, I now implore You for forgiving my sins and I pray to You for condoning my slips; so, please respond to me excellently, because You are the worthiest of responding, the worthiest of being served piously, and the worthiest of forgiving.

(2) O Allah, I implore You for Your forgiveness of every sin that I had physical power to commit it due to the wellbeing that You conferred upon me, or I could do it by my power that You gave to me due to the favor of the blessings that You gave me, or I extended my hand to it (i.e. the sin) using Your sustenance with which You provided me abundantly, or I could hide it from people on account of Your covering up of it, or I, when I anticipated its bad consequences, relied on Your forbearance, or I secured myself from Your control over me due to Your lenience, or I did it on account of my idea about Your honoring pardon. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(3) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that arouses Your wrath, or draws me near to Your rage, or drives me to committing what You have warned me against doing it, or throws me away from what

You have called me to do. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(4) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I have committed in order to attract one of Your creatures towards my seduction or to deceive one with my trickeries; therefore, I taught him what he had ignored concerning that sin and I blocked in his face what he had known about it. As a result, I will meet You carrying my burdens along with additional burdens (i.e. the burdens of those whom I led to committing that sin). So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(5) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that takes to transgression, misleads from orthodoxy, reduces the sustenance, effaces the blessings, and brings about ill reputation. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(6) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin in the doing of which I tired out all my organs at night and in daylight, and because of which I concealed myself from Your servants with my covering although there is no covering save yours. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(7) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin due to the doing of which my enemies watched over me in order to expose me to disgrace, but You warded off their schemes from me and You have not helped them bring shame on me, as if I were one of Your intimate saints, so that You gave me victory over them! Until when will I disobey You, O my Lord, and You give me respite? Many a time have I disobeyed You but You have not chastised me. Then, when I, despite of my evildoings, prayed to You, You gave me. What kind of gratitude that may meet even a single grace of Your graces to me should I make to You? So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(8) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin from which I had repented to You, taken an oath by the honorable Name of You, and called Your intimate servants to witness for me that I would not do it ever

again, but when Satan targeted his schemes at me, causing me to lean on disappointment, and my own self called me to disobey You, I committed the sin once again covertly because I was shy of Your servants, but I had the dare to challenge You, although I know for sure that no veil and no door can ever cover me from You and no screen can ever prevent You from seeing me. So, I, disobeying You, violated what You have warned me not to do.

Then, I removed the veil that I had put on me and faced Your intimate servants as if I were still obedient to You, rushing towards carrying out Your orders, and fearful of Your menace! So, I could cheat on Your servants while none knew my hidden fact except You. Nevertheless, You did not deal with me according to what I really was and according to any other thing than the view that Your servants had about me; rather, You endued me with abundant blessings the like of which You endued them and even You preferred me to them, as if I enjoy the same ranks of them with You! All that is on account of Your forbearance and the favor of Your blessing. All praise be to You, O my Master.

Now, I beseech You, O Allah! Just as You have covered up my defects in this world, so please do not expose me to shame on the Resurrection Day. O most Merciful of all those who show mercy.

(9) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin for the committing and the creating of which I spent many nights sleeplessly, but when morning came upon me, I ostentatiously mended paces towards You putting on the ornament of the righteous people, while I was concealing the opposite of what brings about Your pleasure, O Lord of the Worlds. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(10) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin due to which I wronged one of Your intimate servants, or supported one of Your enemies, or uttered words that You do not like, or stood up to commit acts of other than obedience to You. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(11) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that You warned me against committing it, but I violated Your warning, or You admonished me against doing it, but I kept on doing it, or You showed it ugly for me, but I showed it attractive to myself. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(12) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I have forgotten, but You recorded it, and I have deemed it trivial, but You registered it on me, and I have committed it openly in challenge of You, but You covered it up for me, and If I repented to You from it, You would certainly forgive it. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(13) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I expected that You would punish me for it immediately, but You gave me respite and laid a covering over it, but I exerted all efforts in tearing up that covering. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(14) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that removes Your mercy away from me, or imposes Your punishment on me, or deprives me of Your honoring, or confiscates Your graces from me. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(15) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that begets perdition, or causes tribulations to come upon me, or makes the enemies gloat over my misfortune, or bares the covering, or stops the drops of the sky. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(16) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin for the committing of which I gibed one of Your creatures, or found fault with any of Your beings, but I then indulged myself in it and perpetrated it in violation of You and in audacity to disobey You. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(17) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I repented to You from it and then I committed it and, as a result, I became ashamed to face You while I was committing it and I feared You while I was doing it. Once again, I beseeched You to forgive it for me, but I then redid it. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(18) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that hipped on me and found a place within my deeds because of a pledge that I had made to You, a vow that I had undertaken with You, or a covenant that I had given in Your Name to one of Your creatures, but I then broke it although it was not necessary for me to break it; rather, it was because of my recklessness that I failed to fulfill it, and it was because of my irresponsible exultation that I failed to keep it. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(19) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that is attached me owing to a favor that You have done me and thus I had the power to disobey You, to violate Your prohibition, and to expose myself to Your menace. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(20) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin in which I preferred my own lust to the obedience to You, and favored what I love for myself to carrying out Your order, and pleased myself through bringing about Your wrath to myself after You alerted me with Your reverence, provided before me the reasons for the necessity of abandoning it, and presented to me Your arguments through Your threatening. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(21) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I knew, forgot, remembered, did deliberately, or did unintentionally, but You, without doubt, will ask me about it and my soul is held responsible for it even if I forgot or disregarded it inattentively. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(22) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin by the doing of which I challenged You although I was certain that You saw me doing it, and then I did not care for repenting to You from it and I was made forget to implore You for forgiveness of it. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(23) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin into which I entered, depending upon my good idea about You that You should not torment me for my committing it, and when I hoped for Your forgiveness of it, I embarked boldly upon it, relying on my knowledge about Your nobility that You should not expose me to shame after You had covered me up. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(24) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin due to which I deserved Your rejection of my prayers, Your depriving me of response to my supplications, Your disappointing me due to my greed, and Your thwarting my hope. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(25) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that results in regret, reflects on remorse, detains the pouring down of sustenance, and rejects the supplications. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(26) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that gives rise of illnesses and perdition, conduces to punishments and tribulations, and turns into regret and remorse on the Resurrection Day. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(27) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I praised with my tongue, or hid in my heart, or craved for in my inner self, or put into action within my deeds, or wrote down with my own hand. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(28) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I did secretly at night or in daylight, I did undercover where none could see me except You, O Omnipotent; therefore, I aroused doubts about it and I confused whether I should refrain from doing it for fear of You or I should commit it in violation of You, depending upon my good idea about You. Hence, my soul commended to me committing it, and I did while I was fully aware that I was disobeying You. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(29) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I deemed trivial, or crucial, or grand, or slight, or my ignorance embroiled me in it. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(30) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin by the doing of which I took sides with one of Your creatures, or maltreated one of Your beings, or myself made me to see it fair, or advised someone else to commit it, or led someone else to it, or insisted on doing it deliberately, or kept on doing it due to my ignorance. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(31) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin through which I contravened what is entrusted with me, or I withheld my own due, or I overburdened my body with it, or I chose for my lusts, or I preferred my pleasures, or I informed against someone, or I encouraged those who followed me (in doing it), or I rallied against those who forbade me (from doing it), or I overcame those who had effect on me, or I gained victory through evil means, or my tendency drove me to commit it. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(32) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I committed, using a trick that brings me nearer to Your wrath; or by committing it, I overcame the people of obedience to You, or I attracted someone towards committing an act of disobedience to You, or I showed off before Your servants, or I made them have a wrong idea about me through my deeds.

So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(33) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that You have recorded against me owing to pride that I showed, or ostentation, or false reputation, or arrogance, or excessive elation, or malice, or discommended fun, or exultation, or recklessness, or fanaticism, or partisanship, or self- satisfaction, or anger, or over-generosity, or oppression, or betrayal, or theft, or fabrication, or tale-bearing, or amusement, or mischievousness, or any other state that brings about sinning or results in perdition. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(34) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that You have already known, through Your eternal knowledge, that I would commit depending upon Your power through which You overpowered all things. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(35) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin through which I feared anyone other than You, or I incurred the animosity of Your intimate servants, or I showed loyalty to Your enemies, or I disappointed Your most beloved servants, or I exposed myself to any amount of Your wrath. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(36) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin from which I had repented to You, but I then re-committed it and broke the covenant that I had made with You in challenge of You, because I was sure of Your nobility and pardon. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(37) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that approached me to Your chastisement, cast me away from Your reward, deterred Your mercy from reaching me, or roiled Your graces to me. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(38) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin by the doing of which I untied a knot that I had clinched or I deprived myself of an item of prosperity that You had promised to give me. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(39) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I committed because Your grant of wellbeing had included me, or I could do it depending upon Your favoring blessings, or I had the power to do it due to the abundant sustenance You conferred upon me; and I implore You for forgiveness of every act that I had intended to do purely for Your sake, but other purposes were mixed with my pure intention, and other matters that prevent my act to be sincerely intended for You jumped to the scene, or I became under the obligation of adding other matters than You to my intention. This very often takes place. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(40) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I committed thinking that I am allowed by You to do it, but it was in reality forbidden by You. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(41) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that remained hidden from Your creatures but it never remains secret before You; and when I prayed to You to forgive it for me, You did. Yet, I returned to committing it, and You again covered it up. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(42) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin to the committing of which I made steps, or I stretched my hand, or I watched with my eye attentively, or I listened to with my hearing, or I said with my tongue, or I spent from the sustenance that You had given me; and I then prayed to You for more sustenance, and You did provide me with more sustenance; and I then used Your sustenance for disobeying You, and You covered me up; and I once again prayed to You for more, and You did not disappoint me; and I then challenged You in committing that sin, but You did not expose me.

I thus kept persistently on disobeying You, and You kept forbearingly and forgivingly on covering up my sins. O most Generous of all those who act generously! So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(43) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin the little of which imposes on me Your painful torture, the much of which afflicts on me Your severe punishment, the doing of which quickens Your chastisement, and the insistence on which causes the removal of Your graces. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(44) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that none could see except You, none could know about it except You, none can save me from its consequences except Your forbearance, and nothing can comprehend it except Your pardon. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(45) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that eliminates the graces, imposes punishments, expedites destitution, and augments regret. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(46) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that wipes out the rewards for good deeds, doubles up the punishment for evildoings, expedites the chastisement, and enrages You, O Lord of the heavens. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(47) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that You are the worthiest of knowing it from me, since You have been the worthiest of covering it up, for You are the worthiest of being feared and the worthiest of forgiving. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(48) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin due to which I made one of Your intimate servants frown impatiently at me, because I assisted Your enemies or joined the people of disobedience to You against

the people of obedience. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(49) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that dressed me with arrogance; while being engrossed in it increased me nothing but more humiliation, or made me despair of the availability of Your mercy, or made me too negligent to return to obedience to You due to my despondency that stemmed from the enormity of my crime and the ill idea I had about myself. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(50) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that would have led me to perdition had it not been for Your mercy, made me alight into the abode of perdition had it not been for Your embracing me, and driven me to the path of deviation had it not been for Your showing me the straight path. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(51) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that deterred me from following that to which You have guided me or that which You have ordered me to do, or discouraged me from carrying out what You have ordered me to carry out, and from refraining from what You have warned me against doing it, and from following the path that is full of my good fortune and that takes me to attain Your pleasure, prefer love for You (to anything else), and to come closer to You. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(52) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that prevents my prayers from reaching You, cuts off my hope for You, extends my sufferings from Your wrath, or cuts down my hope to get what You have in possession. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(53) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that kills the heart, flares up agony, satisfies Satan, and enrages the All-beneficent Lord. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(54) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that ends in despair of Your mercy, gives up hope for Your forgiveness, and deprives of the abundant favors that are in Your possession. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(55) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin for the doing of which I detested myself as a sign of glorifying You and when I declared repentance from it, You accepted my repentance, and when I prayed to You for pardon, You pardoned me. However, my fancy then made me incline to re-committing it, depending covetously on Your vast mercy and Your noble pardon, but I neglected Your threatening and hoped for Your nice promise. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(56) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that brings about the blackness of faces on the day when the faces of Your intimate servants shall be white while the faces of Your enemies shall be black, when some of them advance against others, blaming each other. Yet, it shall be said to them, 'Do not quarrel in My presence, and indeed I gave you the threatening beforehand.' So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(57) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that leads to disbelief, drags long deliberation, achieves poverty, and begets difficulty. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(58) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that brings nearer the termination of lifetime, cuts off all expectations, and uproots life spans, whether I expressed it verbally, or I kept silent because I am too embarrassed to mention it before You, or I concealed it in my chest but You knew about it, for You know the secrets and what is yet more hidden. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(59) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin the committing of which cuts off provisions, rejects supplications, brings about tribula-

tions in succession, takes to distresses, and magnifies grief. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(60) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that makes me hateful to Your servants, alienates me from Your intimate saints, or diverts the affection of the people of obedience to You from me because of the estrangement caused by the acts of disobedience to You, the engagement in offensive crimes, and the distress of committing sins. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(61) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I have concealed its defects that You showed as merits, or I have revealed of it what You covered up, or I have presented as ugly that which You made attractive. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(62) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that excludes from Your covenant, does not secure against Your wrath, does not allow Your mercy to come down, and does not perpetuate Your blessings. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(63) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I hid myself against Your servants when I did it under sunlight and I challenged You in committing it in the murk of night due to my audacity to defy You, although I knew for sure that all secrets are open before You, all hidden things are apparent before You, no barrier can ever defend me against You, and neither property nor sons can benefit me with You unless I should come to You with a heart free from evil. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(64) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that entails forgetting about remembering You, or causes negligence of Your warnings, or makes me persist in feeling secured from Your schemes, or tempts me to ask for sustenance from one other than You, or makes me despair of the

prosperity that You have in possession. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(65) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that grabbed hold of me because of my blaming You when my sustenance was detained, or because of my turning away from You, or because of my inclination to Your servants submissively, or because of my earnest entreaty to them. Yet, You have made me listen to Your saying in Your decisive Book: 'But they were not submissive to their Lord nor do they humble themselves.' So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(66) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that stuck to me because I sought the help of one other than You when I was inflicted by an agony, or because I depended upon one other than You in releasing me from it. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(67) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that made me fear one other than You, or instigated me to humble myself before one of Your creatures, or awakened my desire for hoping for what is possessed by one of Your creatures, or adorned in my eyes the obedience to one of Your creatures that was based on disobedience to You so that I would gain what he had in possession, while I know for sure that I am always in need for You and I can never dispense with You. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(68) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I praised with my tongue, or my soul craved it, or my deeds proved it as good, or I urged on doing it through my statements, while it is in Your sight is so hideous that it would expose me to Your punishment. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(69) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that I personally put it into effect because I deemed it unimportant, and my soul presented it before me as little and urged me to belittle it until I exceeded all limits

in committing it. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and forgive it to me, O Best of all forgivers.

(70) O Allah, I implore You for forgiveness of every sin that You knew from me and whose consequence You applied to me to the last of my life-time, including all of my sins; the first and the last, the intentional and the unintentional, the small and the big, the trivial and the grand, the old and the recent, the secret and the open, and all sins that I will commit.

I now repent before You (from all these sins) and beseech You to bless Muhammad and his Household and to forgive me all of my wrongdoings against the servants that You have counted against me. Verily, there are many duties of mine towards Your servants by which I am bound. I thus beseech You to forgive all of them as You wish and when You wish. O most Merciful of all those who show mercy! 69

Supplication After The Midday Prayer

Upon accomplishing the obligatory Midday Prayer (salat Al-zuhr), Imam Ali (‘a) used to say this supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, all praise be to You and the entire affair, both the open and the secret, is returned to You. You are the utmost of all affairs. O Allah, all praise be to You for Your pardon although You are able to punish. All praise be to You for Your forgiveness although You have all power.

O Allah, all praise be to You; You are the highest in ranks, the responsive to prayers, the sender of blessings from above seven skies, the grantor of requests, the changer of evildoings into good deeds, the maker of good deeds rise to high ranks, the bringer forth of light from utter darkness.

O Allah, all praise be to You; You are the Forgiver of faults, the Acceptor of repentance, the severe to punish, and the Lord of bounty. There is no god save you and to You shall be the return.

O Allah, all praise be to You in the night when it draws a veil. To You be all praise in the day when it shines in brightness. To You be all praise in

the Hereafter and the former life.

O Allah, all praise be to You in the night when it departs. All praise be to You in the dawn as it breathes away darkness. All praise be to You at the rising of the sun and at the setting of it. All praise be to You for Your graces that cannot be counted in number and that cannot expire forever and everlastingly. O Allah, all praise be to You in the bygone and all praise be to You in the coming.

O Allah, You are my trust in all affairs, my means to the granting of all requests, my companion at all appeals, my entertainment at all loneliness, and my shelter at all perditions.

O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and his Household, expand my sustenance for me, confer blessing upon what You have given me, help me settle my debt, and set aright all of my affairs. Verily, You are clement and merciful. There is no god save Allah the All-forbearing and All-generous. There is no god save Allah the Lord of the Worlds. There is no god save Allah the Great Lord of the Throne.

O Allah, I beseech You for the motives of Your mercy, the determining causes of Your forgiveness, the advantage of each act of kindness, the safeguarding against each and every sin, the winning of Paradise, and the redemption from Hellfire.

O Allah, (please) do not leave any of my offenses not forgiven, any of my misfortunes unrelieved, any of my ailments unhealed, any fear (that I experience) unsecured, and any need unanswered, in the name of Your favoring, benevolence, and mercy, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy. 70

Supplicatory Prayer After The Afternoon Prayer

Upon accomplishing the obligatory Afternoon Prayer (salat al-'asr), Imam Ali ('a) used to say this supplicatory prayer:

All Glory be to Allah, all praise be to Allah, there is no god save Allah, Allah is the Most Great, and there is neither power nor might save with

Allah, the Most High, the All-magnificent.

Glory be to Allah in the morning and the evening hours. Glory be to Allah in the early hours of night and morning. 'Glory be to Allah when you enter the night and when you enter the morning. Unto Him be praise in the heavens, the earth, at the sun's decline, and in the noonday.'

'Glorified be Your Lord, the Lord of Majesty, from that which they attribute (to Him). Peace be upon the Messengers. All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.' Glory be to the Lord of Kingdom and Realm. Glory be to the Lord of Majesty and Magnificence. Glory be to Allah the Ever-living Who never dies. Glory be to Allah the Self-Existent, the Eternal. Glory be to the Ever-living, the Self-Existent. Glory be to the Exalted, the Most High. All glory be to Him, and Exalted be He. Venerated is He and Holy is He; the Lord of the angels and the Spirit.

O Allah, my sin is now taking shelter in Your pardon. My fear is taking shelter in Your security. My poverty is taking shelter in Your richness. My humility is taking shelter in Your dignity. O Allah, please bless Muhammad and his Household, forgive me, and have mercy on me. Verily, You are worthy of all praise, full of all glory.

O Allah, Your Brilliance is perfect; so, You guided (to the right). All praise be to You for that. Your forbearance is enormous; so, You pardoned. All praise be to You for that. As You stretched Your Hand, You gave abundantly. All praise be to You for that.

Our Lord, Your Honorable Face is the most honorable of all faces, Your stature the greatest of all statures, and Your gifts the best of all gifts.

Our Lord, when You are obeyed, You thank; and when You, our Lord, are disobeyed, You forgive. You respond to the distressed, relieve from evil, rescue from anguishes, give riches to the poor, heal the ailed, and none can ever recompense Your elegances. You are the most Merciful of all those who show mercy. 71

It is also reported that Imam Ali ('a) used to say the following brief supplicatory prayer after accomplishing the Afternoon

Prayers:

All glory be to the Lord of munificence and graces. All glory be to the Lord of all-powerfulness and favoring. I beseech Allah for satisfaction with His acts, working for obedience to Him, and submission to His commands. Verily, He is the Hearer of prayers. 72

Supplication After The Sunset Prayer

Immediately after accomplishing the obligatory Sunset Prayer (salat Al- maghrib), Imam Ali ('a) used to prayer to Almighty Allah with these words:

O Allah, please accept from me what is righteous and set aright of my deeds what is corruptive. O Allah, do not allow me to corrupt what You have set aright from my affairs, but set aright my affairs that I have corrupted.

O Allah, I implore You for Your forgiveness of every sin that I had physical power to commit due to the wellbeing that You conferred upon me, or I could do it by my power that You gave to me due to the favor of the blessings that You gave me, or I extended my hand to it (i.e. the sin) on account of Your sustenance with which You provided me abundantly, or I could hide it from people on account of Your covering up of it, or I did it on account of my idea about Your honoring pardon.

O Allah, I implore You for Your forgiveness of any sin from which I had repented to You, regretted committing it, felt shy of You while I was committing it, and feared You in the midst of doing it, but I then returned to and redid it.

O Allah, I implore You for Your forgiveness of every sin that I recollected, forgot, remembered, overlooked, did intentionally or unintentionally, but I am without doubt answerable for it even if I had forgotten or failed to remember it.

O Allah, I implore You for Your forgiveness of every sin that I brought upon myself with my own hands and preferred following my own lusts

when I did it, or I informed against someone through it, or I encouraged those who followed me (in doing it), or I refrained arrogantly from listening to the advice of those who discouraged me from doing it, or I overcame them due to my ignorance, or I gained victory through evil schemes against others, and my tendency drove me to commit it.

O Allah, I implore You for Your forgiveness of every act that I had intended to do purely for Your sake, but other purposes were mixed with my pure intention, and other matters jumped to the scene, or I became under the obligation of adding other matters than Your sake to my intention. I implore You for forgiveness of every vow that I had taken upon myself, but I then violated it because of following my whims.

O Allah, please send blessings upon Muhammad and his Household, release me from Hellfire, and endue me with Your favors out of Your generosity.

O Allah, I beseech You in the name of Your Face; the noble, the everlasting, the perpetual, by whose light the heavens and the earth glittered and by which You removed the darkness of the lands and the seas and managed all the affairs of the jinn and human beings, [I beseech You] to bless Muhammad and his Household and to set aright my entire affair, in the name of Your mercy, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy. 73

It is also reported that Imam Ali (‘a) used to say the following brief doxology upon the accomplishment of the Sunset Prayer:

All praise be to Allah Who causes the night to enter into the day and causes the day to enter into the night. All praise be to Allah whenever night overspreads and comes with darkness. All praise be to Allah whenever a star rises and falls. 74

Supplicatory Prayer After The Evening Prayer

Immediately after accomplishing the obligatory Evening Prayer (salat Al- ‘isha'), Imam Ali (‘a) used to say the following supplication:

O Allah, please send blessings upon Muhammad and his Household, guard me with Your Eye that never sleeps, embrace me with Your support that is invincible, and forgive me in the name of Your power over me, O Lord of majesty and honoring.

O Allah, I pray for Your protection against the strokes of nights and days and against the oppression of every oppressor, the envy of every envier, and the transgression of every transgressor.

O Allah, please guard me in myself, my family members, my property, and all of Your graces that You allowed me to dispose of them.

O Allah, manage my affairs from which I am absent with the management of You, and do not make me rely upon myself in the affairs that are in my presence. O He Who cannot be harmed by sins and Who never lacks forgiveness, please forgive me that which never harms You and give me from that which never causes You reduction. Verily, You are the most liberal Bestower.

O Allah, I beseech You for an imminent relief, excellent patience, expansive sustenance, pardon, and wellbeing in this world and the other world.

O Allah, please send blessings upon Muhammad and his Household and forgive me, my parents, and the believing men and women, both the alive and the deceased.

O Allah, please include me with those who remember You very frequently, thank You incessantly, serve You persistently, and fulfill Your trusts.

O Allah, please purify my tongue from telling lies, my heart from hypocrisy, my deed from showing off, and my sight from stealthy looks. Verily, You know the stealthy looks and that which the breasts conceal.

O Allah, O Lord of the seven skies and whatever they cover, Lord of the seven layers of the earth and whatever they carry, Lord of the winds and whatever they scatter far, Lord of all things, God of all things, First of all

things, Last of all things, Lord of Gabriel, Michael, and Seraph, and God of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, and Jacob!

I beseech You to bless Muhammad and his Household, to take care of me through Your mercy, to include me with wellbeing from You, to make me happy through Your forgiveness, and not to give any hand to any of Your creatures over me.

O Allah, please draw me near You, make me straight on good manner-ism, rescue me from the evils of the devilish jinn and men, guard me at the hours of night and day, safeguard me as regards my family members, property, children, brothers, and all of Your graces that You have granted me, and forgive me, my parents, and all the believing men and women.

O Patron of the ever-abiding, good works! Verily, You have power over all things. O transcendent Patron and transcendent Helper! [Let all that be] In the name of Your mercy, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy. May Allah's blessings be upon our chief Muhammad, the Prophet, and upon his immaculate household and offspring. 75

Supplication After Every Obligatory Prayer

After accomplishing any obligatory prayer, Imam Ali ('a) would praise and thank Almighty Allah and say the following supplication:

O Allah, to You only are voices raised and prayers said. To You only are all faces submissive. To You only are all necks nodded in acquiescence. To You only is the judgment of deeds. O He Who is the best of all of the supplicated ones! O He Who is the best of all those who may give! O All-veracious! O All-kind! O He Who never breaks His promise! O He Who has ordered of supplicating and assured response of supplications!

O He Who has said, 'Call upon Me, I will answer you. Surely, those who are too proud for My service shall soon enter hell abased.'

O He Who has said, 'And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me; so, they should answer My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way.'

O He Who has said, 'O my servants who have acted extravagantly against their own souls! Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Surely, Allah forgives the faults altogether. Surely, He is the Forgiving the Merciful.'

Here I am responding to You and here I am trying to please You. Here I am standing in Your Presence! While I am the one who has acted extravagantly against himself, You are the One Who has said, 'Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Surely, Allah forgives the faults altogether. Surely, He is the Forgiving the Merciful.' 76

Supplication Before The Night Prayer

Before offering the highly recommended Night Prayer, Imam Ali ('a) used to say the following supplication:

O Allah, the hearts of the humble servants are eager for You. The intellects of the sane servants are entertained by You. The reverence of those who work for You meticulously is dedicated to You. The minds of those who are negligent are seeking shelter with You.

O He Who is the hope of the cognitive ones and the expectation of the hard working servants, please send blessings upon Muhammad and his immaculate Household, deliver me from the scandals on the Judgment Day when all coverings will be exposed and what is in the hearts will be made apparent; and entertain me when the sinful will be fearful and the negligent will be astounded; in the name of Your mercy, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy.

By Your Might and Majesty I swear! When I disobeyed You, I have not intended to violate You, and when I disobeyed You, I have never been unaware of Your Status, and I have never intended to expose myself to

Your punishment, and I have never belittled Your watching over me; rather, my soul has commended to me, my adversity has overcome me, and I was deceived by Your screen that covers all of my defects.

I thus disobeyed You because of my ignorance and defied You because of my failing efforts. Now, who can save me from Your punishment? Whose rope can I maintain if You cut off the rope that connects me with You? What a shame shall be on me tomorrow when I will be detained before You when the light-loaded ones will be allowed to pass, but the heavy-loaded ones will be stopped?

Shall I pass with the light-loaded ones or shall I be stopped with the heavy-loaded ones? Woe to me! The older I am the more sinful I become! So often have I declared repentance! So often have I returned to committing acts of disobedience! Has not the time come that I be ashamed of my Lord?

Imam Ali ('a) would then prostrate himself and repeat the following imploration three hundred times:

I pray for the forgiveness of Allah and I repent before Him. 77

Supplication After The First Two Units Of The Night Prayer

Upon accomplishing the first two units of the Night Prayer, Imam Ali ('a) used to say the following supplication:

O my God, I slept for a little time, but I was awakened by Your manifest saying, 'Their sides draw away from their beds, they call upon their Lord in fear and in hope, and they spend benevolently out of what We have given them. So, no soul knows what is hidden for them of that which will refresh the eyes; a reward for what they did.'

I therefore deserted the nice sleep and tolerated the heaviness of sleeplessness, and I drew away from the pleasant slumber, shed heavy tears, trod on the ground with my feet, confessed of my sins before You; and stood

in Your Presence, standing erect and sitting; and entreated You earnestly and submissively, genuflecting and prostrating; and prayed to You in fear and in hope; and desired for You eagerly and confoundedly: calling upon You with a clear heart, speaking to You confidentially with flowing tears, resorting to You from my harshness, seeking Your protection against my audacity, appealing for Your help against my ignorance, clinging to the handles that take to You so as to get rid of my sins, and constructing my heart with the remembrance of You.

O my God, if the earth knew about my sins, it would swallow me; if heavens knew about them, they would snatch me; if oceans knew about them, they would drown me; if mountains knew about them, they would collapse on me; and if the deserts knew about them, they would swallow me.

O my God, what horrible seduction I have brought upon myself! What bold audacity I have shown to You, O my Lord!

O my God, all those to whom I came are leading me to You. There is none but that he guides me to You. No creature for whom I desired but that he advices me to put my desire in You. So, I found You the most excellent Lord, but You found me the worst servant of You!

O my God, if You decide to punish me, then who can deter punishment from me? If You decide to expose me, then who can cover me up? If You decide to annihilate me, then who can interfere before You concerning the affair of me Your slave? I have already known for sure that Your decrees are devoid of injustice and Your punishment does not count on immediateness.

Verily, immediateness is the work of him who fears lest he may miss, and only do the weak need injustice. As for You, You are too exalted to be so Exalted and Great You are beyond all measure! So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and'

The Imam ('a) then submitted his personal needs. After that, he ('a) would continue on saying,

O Allah, I seek Your protection lest my outward appearance seems admirable in the eyes (of people) while my innermost fact proves hideous in Your sight; I thus try my best to keep myself excellent in the eyes of people ostentatiously by showing them my good appearance, while I in fact show You my evildoing, thus I seek nearness to people but I draw myself away from Your pleasure. 78

Supplication After The Night Prayer

Upon accomplishing the Night Prayer, Imam Ali (‘a) would say the following supplication:

I bear witness that the heavens, the earth, and whatsoever lies between them are portents testifying to Your Existence and demonstrations proving that to which You have called. Every thing that proves Your argument and testifies to Your Godhead is marked with the traces of Your grace and the features of Your excellent managements by which You exalted highly above Your creatures and thus conducted to the hearts the amount of recognition of You by which these hearts are entertained against the loneliness of thinking and saved from the floundering of pleas.

Although hearts confess of recognizing You and desiring for You, they bear witness that allusions can never depict You or can intellects and sights comprehend You. I seek Your protection lest I refer to any other one than You with my heart, tongue, or hand. There is no god save You; You are One, Single, Unique, and Independent; and all of us are surrendering to You. 79

Post-Prayer Supplications

Immediately after accomplishing any prayer, be it obligatory or supererogatory, Imam Ali (‘a) used to say the following supplication:

O Allah, I have performed a prayer for You and I have supplicated to You. However, my prayers and supplications may be affected by defect,

hastiness, inadvertence, negligence, lethargy, laziness, oblivion, rashness, showing off, exhibition, doubt, distraction, suspicion, diversion, and moments that preoccupy from establishing the prayers that You have made obligatory.

So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and replace their imperfection with perfection and replace my rashness with deliberation and firmness, my inadvertence with vigilance, my negligence with care, my lethargy with activity, my laziness with energy, my oblivion with retaining, my imprudence with perseverance, my showing off with sincerity, my ostentation with covering up, my doubt with certitude, my lack of deliberation with submission, my suspicion with certainty, my distraction with attention, and my diversion with acquiescence, because I performed the prayer for Your sake purely, I supplicated to You only, I intended for nothing but Your Face, I turned my face to none save You, I believed in none but You, I put my trust in none except You, and I requested for nothing but what You have in possession.

So, please bless Muhammad and his Household and decide for me on account of my prayers and supplications mercy and blessings due to which You excuse my evildoings, double up the rewards for my good deeds, raise my rank, honor my position, whiten my face, unburden my loads, and accept my obligatory and supererogatory devotional acts.

O Allah, please bless Muhammad and his Household, free me from my burdensome sins in favor of my prayers and make the sustenance that You have with You for me to be better for me than what has been stopped to reach me.

All praise be to Allah Who has helped me made up my prayers. 'Surely, prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers.'

All praise be to Allah Who has guided us to this. We would not have found the way had it not been that Allah had guided us.

All praise be to Allah Who has honored my face when I prostrated before nothing save Him.

O Allah, just as You have honored my face against prostrating before anyone save You, so also please send blessings upon Muhammad and his Household and safeguard my face from asking from anyone save You.

O Allah, please bless Muhammad and his Household, accept my prayer with the most excellent acceptance of You, and do not call me to account for its imperfection, and please perfect for me the parts in which my heart was distracted, in the name of Your mercy, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy.

O Allah, please bless Muhammad and his Household: (they are) the Men in Authority and the obedience to whom You have made obligatory upon us, the Blood-relations whom You ordered us to regard, the Kindred to whom You ordered us to show affection, the People of the Reminder whom You have ordered us to ask, the Masters to whom You ordered us to be loyal, and the People of the House from whom You removed all filth and whom You purified with complete purification.

O Allah, please bless Muhammad and his Household, make the reward for my prayers, the reward for my utterance, and the reward for my sitting to be Your pleasure and Paradise. Make all that to be so pure and sincere that it earns mercy and response from You.

Answer me as regards all of the items of prosperity for which I have implored You, and then grant me more prosperity and more from Your favors and abundant donations. Verily, You are All-pervading and All-generous. Make all that to be attached to the prosperity and bliss of the Hereafter. I am really one of those who desire for You, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy!

O Lord of favors that never interrupt! O Lord of errands that never expire! O Lord of graces that cannot be counted in number! O All-generous! O All- generous! O All-generous! Please, bless Muhammad and his Household and include me with those who believed in You and You thus guided them to the truth, those who put their trust in You and You thus saved them (from all troubles), those who besought You and You thus responded to them pleasingly, and those who acted sincerely to You and You thus delivered them.

O Allah, please send blessings upon Muhammad and his Household, and make us alight in a house abiding forever out of Your grace; toil shall not touch us therein, nor shall fatigue therein afflict us.

O Allah, I beseech You the beseeching of one who is humble and needy, to bless Muhammad and his Household, to forgive me all my sins, and to grant me all my requests that I have asked from You. Verily, You have power over all things.

O Allah, as regards the needs that my requests have not included, the things that I am too powerless to do, and the things that I am not too clever to mention, among the things that You know that they prosper my worldly life and next life; then please bless Muhammad and his Household and do all that to me in the name of Your mercy while I enjoy well-being (from You).

Only that which Allah wills to be shall come to pass. There is no might and no power except with Allah. 80

Supplication After The Relief Prayer

One of the supererogatory prayers, the Relief Prayer (salat Al-faraj) consists of two units (rak'ah), in the first of which Surah Al-Fatihah is recited once and Surah Al-Tawhid repeated one thousand times. In the second unit, Surah Al-Fatihah is recited once and Surah Al-Tawhid recited once only.

When Imam Ali ('a) offered this prayer, he used to say the following supplication afterward:

O Allah, O He Who cannot be seen with eyes and cannot be comprehended by visions! O He Who cannot be described by the describers! O He Who cannot be changed by ages! O He Who does not anticipate the vicissitudes of time! O He Who never tastes death! O He Who does not anticipate missing anything! O He Who is not harmed by sins and Who is not affected by forgiveness! O He Who knows the weights of moun-

tains, the amounts of water in oceans, the number of the raindrops, the number of the leaves of trees, and the creeping of the creatures.

No sky can hide another sky from You, nor can any land hide another land from You, nor can any ocean hide what lies in its bottom from You, nor can any mountain hide what lies in its rugged ways from You. You know the stealthy looks, and that which the breasts conceal, and that on which night casts its darkness, and that on which daylight casts its light.

I beseech You by Your Name the hoarded, the hidden, which is known by none but You in Your unseen knowledge, which You use for Yourself exclusively, and from which You derived Your Name and You are thus Allah; there is no god save You alone, alone, alone; having no partner with You; and [I beseech You] by Your Name that You respond when You are besought by it and You give when You are asked by it.

And I beseech You in the name of Your missioned Prophets, in the name of the bearers of Your Throne, in the name of Your favorite archangels, in the name of Gabriel, Michael, and Seraph, and in the name of Muhammad, his Household, and his offspring may Your blessings be upon them to bless Muhammad and his Household and to make the last of my lifetime to be the best part of it and the last of my deeds to be the best of them. I beseech for Your forgiveness and pleasure, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy. 81

Supplication After Offering A Prayer At Al-Ju'fi Mosque

Imam Ali ('a), accompanied by Maytham Al-Tammar, used to visit Al-Ju'fi Mosque in Al-Kufah where he used to offer a four-unit prayer after the accomplishing of which he would say the following supplication:

O my God, how dare I pray to You after I have disobeyed You, but how can I stop praying You after I have recognized You, and love for You is firmly established in my heart? I am extending towards You a hand that is full of sins and an eye that is glancing with hope for You.

O my God, You are the Possessor of all gifts, while I am the prisoner of wrongdoings. To be lenient to the prisoners is one of the honorable attributes of the great ones. I am the prisoner of my offence and the bound to my evildoings.

O my God, how narrow the path for him whom You have not guided is! How lonely the course of him whom You do not entertain is!

O my God, if You will interrogate me for my sins, I will demand with Your pardon. If You will interrogate me for my hidden wrongdoings, I will demand with Your nobility. If You will interrogate me for my evils, I will demand with Your goodness. If You make me join Your enemies in Hellfire, I will tell them that I loved You and I bore witness that there is no god save Allah.

O my God, my pleasure is fearful of You, then how can my pleasure be secured from You? O my God, obedience to You pleases You, while disobedience to You does not harm You; so, please endue me with what pleases You and forgive me what does not harm You, and accept my repentance. You are verily the Relenting, the Merciful.

O Allah, please bless Muhammad and his Household and have mercy on me when my trace is cut off from this world, my mention is wiped out among the creatures, and I became just another forgotten one like the many other forgotten ones.

O my God, I have grown old, my bones have become thin, years have affected me, the days of my lifetime are expiring, my attractive parts are disappearing, my lusts have gone but their consequences are still effective, my body is wearing out, my parts are being cut off, my organs are being separated, and I am still bound to my deeds.

O my God, sins have confuted me, my expressiveness is no longer efficient, and I have lost any argument (in defense of myself).

O my God, I am confessing of my sin, admitting my crime, imprisoned by my offenses, bound to my deeds, reckless in my wrongdoing, too con-

founded to find my path, and left alone and lost. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household, grant me Your favors, and excuse me.

O my God, if my deed is too little when compared to the true obedience to You, then my hope for You is too big when compared to my prospect from You.

O my God, how can it be that I return from You with disappointment and deprivation while I expect, depending upon Your magnanimity, that You will endow me with mercy?

O my God, I have not shaded despair over my good idea about You; so, please do not frustrate my true hope for You from among those who put their hopes in You.

O my God, my offense is great because I will be answerable for it before You, and my sin is grand because it was done in challenge of You. However, when I remember the enormity of my sin and the enormity of Your pardon and forgiveness, I would conclude that Your mercy and pleasure are the nearest to me.

O my God, if fear of Your chastisement called me to Hellfire, then my hope for Your excellent reward called me to Paradise.

O my God, if wrongdoings prevented me from enjoying the excellencies of Your gentleness, then the nobilities of Your pardon entertained me by my certitude.

O my God, if my inadvertence has screened me against readying myself for meeting You, then my recognition of the generosity of Your bounties, O my Master, has awakened me.

O my God, if my reason failed to set aright whatever makes me righteous, then my certainty that You will confer upon me whatever benefits me has never failed.

O my God, if the days of my lifetime have been spent in doing what is in violation of what You love, then the past years of my lifetime have also carried my belief in You.

O my God, I have come to You distressed and dressed with destitution; and the detrimental consequences of my poverty have made me stand before You among the humble ones.

O my God, You have been always generous; so, please grant me from Your generosity, since I am one of Your suppliants. You have always given errands magnanimously; so, please mix me with those whom You grant earnings.

O my God, I am now standing on one of the doors of Your donations, begging You and refraining from asking for anything from any other one than You. It does not correspond to Your Stature that You may reject a distressed beggar who desperately waits for an item of kindness that You familiarly grant.

O my God, I am standing on the arch of hazards, suffering from the ordeals of my deeds and my bad choice, unless You help me pass by means of alleviating my loads and burdens.

O my God, have You decided that I should be of the people of misery, so that I should spend my times weeping? Or have You decided that I should be of the people of happiness, so that I should give this good news to my hope?

O my God, if You will deprive me of seeing Muhammad may Allah bless him and his Household and turn the face of my hope away with disappointment, then this is contrary to the hope in which I indulged myself, O Lord of majesty, honoring, bounty, and favoring!

O my God, if You had not guided me to Islam, I would not have been guided to it. If You had not provided me with the favor of believing in You, I would not have believed in You. If You had not released my tongue to pray to You, I would not have been able to pray to You. If You had not made me taste the sweetness of recognition of You, I would not have recognized You.

O my God, if failure has dissuaded me from competing with the pious people (in obedience to You), then my confidence in You has made me

stand with the righteous people on the scales (that take to You).

O my God, how come that You give fire free hand over a heart that You filled with love for You in this world, so that the fire will burn it in the flames of hell?

O my God, all agonized ones resort to You, and all deprived ones hope for You.

O my God, when the devoted servants heard about Your abundant reward, they acted submissively towards You. When those who slipped from the straight course to You heard about Your magnanimity, they returned. When the sinful heard about Your all-inclusive mercy, they took pleasure in it.

When the offenders heard about Your generous pardon, they craved it, until the bands of the disobedient servants of You crowded, and each one of them clamored with roaring of supplication to You in Your land, while each one of them had a hope and a request that drove them to You, since You are the besought of all with Whom the faces of requests will never be turned black. Please, bless Muhammad Your Prophet and his Household and do to me that which befits You. Verily, You are the Hearer of prayers. 82

Supplications In The Month Of Ramadan

Imam Ali (‘a) received the month of Ramadan with great joy, because this month is dedicated to Almighty Allah and it represents the best time of obedience to Him and winning His forgiveness.

Upon seeing the new moon of Ramadan, Imam Ali (‘a) said the following supplication:

O Allah, (please do) cause this crescent to carry with it for us security, faith, safety, submission to Your order, encompassing wellbeing, and re-

pulsion of ailments. O Allah, (please do) provide us with the opportunity to observe fasting in this month, to do devotional acts, and to recite the Quran. O Allah, keep us sound for the month of Ramadan, accept our deeds, and save us during its days. 83

Immediately before breaking his fast, Imam Ali ('a) used to say this supplication:

O Allah, for You have we fasted and with Your sustenance have we broken our fasting; so, (please) accept form us. You are surely the All-hearing, the All-knower. 84

Supplications In Mornings And Evenings

A number of supplicatory prayers are reported to have been frequently and regularly said by Imam Ali ('a) in mornings and evenings.

Supplication At Sunrise

At the time of the rising of the sun, Imam Ali ('a) used to say the following supplication:

O wonderfully shaped and miraculously formed Sun, you have been made a lamp for visions and a source of benefit to the people of the countries. Your rising is like a new life while your setting is like death. If you rise, then your rising is under a well-established decree, and when you set, your setting is to a well-fortified place.

I beseech Him Who has adorned the sky with you, attired you with light, designed for you the corners of your rising-places, and screened you with the glowing rays; thus, any thing that comes near you will be obliterated and any human being that faces you will be burnt I beseech Him to grant us health through you, to repel our ailments, to remove our estrangement, to remove our agonies, to protect us from slipping, following our

whims, and exposing to perdition, to grant us the longest lifetime and the best of all deeds, and to make your rising a cause of a new, happy determination that brings to us the dress of wellbeing and secures for us the warding off of punishments.

O Allah, please bless Muhammad and his Household, perfect for us Your elegances that You have decided for us, and safeguard for us the favors that You have done us. Verily, You are the Patron of all munificence, the Donor of all favors, the Lord of copious bounty, and the Doer of whatever You wish to do. All praise be to Allah the Lord of the Worlds, and He is sufficient to us; and He is the most excellent patron. 85

Supplication In The Morning

Famously known as du'a' Al-sabah, the following supplication is one of the most prominent supplicatory prayers of Imam Ali ('a) who used to say in mornings:

O Allah, O He Who extended the morning's tongue in the speech of its dawning, dispatched the fragments of the dark night into the gloom of its stammering, made firm the structure of the turning spheres in the measure of its display, and beamed forth the brightness of the sun through the light of its blazing!

O He Who demonstrates His Essence by His Essence, transcends from congeniality with His creatures, and is exalted beyond conformity with His qualities! O He Who is near to the passing thoughts of opinions, far from the regards of eyes, and knows what will be before it comes to be!

O He Who has put me at ease in the cradle of His security and sanctuary, awakened me to the favors and kindness that He has bestowed upon me, and held back from me the claws of evil with His hand and His authority! Bless, O Allah, the guide to You in the darkest night, who, of Your ropes, clings to the cord of the longest nobility, whose pure lineage evident at the summit of stout shoulders, and whose feet were entrenched in spite of slippery places in ancient time. And [bless] his household, the good, chosen, and pious.

Open for us, O Allah, the leaves of the morning's door with the keys of mercy and prosperity! Clothe me, O Allah, with the most excellent robes of guidance and righteousness! Plant, O Allah, through Your tremendousness, the springs of humility in the watering place of my heart! Cause to flow, O Allah, through fear of You, tears of moaning from the corners of my eyes! Chastise, O Allah, the recklessness of my clumsiness with the reins of contentment!

My God, if mercy from You does not begin with fair success for me, then who can take me to You upon the evident path? If Your deliberateness should turn me over to the guide of hope and wishes, then who will annul my slips from the stumbles of caprice? If Your help should forsake me in the battle against the soul and Satan, then Your forsaking will have submitted me to where there is hardship and deprivation.

My God, do You see that I have only come to You from the direction of hopes, or clung to the ends of Your cords when my sins have driven me from the house of union? So, what an evil mount upon which my soul has mounted-its caprice! Woe upon it for being seduced by its own opinions and wishes! Destruction be upon it for its audacity toward its Master and Protector!

My God, I have knocked upon the door of Your mercy with the hand of my hope, fled to You seeking refuge from my excessive caprice, and fixed the fingers of my love to the ends of Your cords. So pardon, O Allah, the slips and errors I have committed, and release me from the foot-tangling of my robe, for You are my Master, my Protector, my Support and my Hope, and You are the object of my search and my desire in my ultimate end and stable abode.

My God, how could You drive away a poor beggar who seeks refuge in You from sins, fleeing? How could You disappoint one seeking guidance who repairs to Your threshold, running? How could You reject a thirsty man who comes to Your pools to drink? Never! For Your pools are full in the hardship of drought, Your door is open for seeking and penetration, and You are the goal of requests and the object of hopes.

My God, these are the reins of my soul I have bounded with the ties of Your will. These are the burdens of my sins I have averted with Your pardon and mercy. These are my misleading caprices I have referred to the threshold of Your gentleness and kindliness.

So, make this morning of mine, O Allah, descend upon me with the radiance of guidance and safety in religion and this world! And [make] my evening a shield against the deception of enemies and a protection against the destructive blows of caprice! Verily, You have power to do what You will!

You give the kingdom to whom You will, seize the kingdom from whom You will, exalt whom You will, and abase whom You will. In Your hand is the good and You are powerful over all things. You make the night to enter into the day, make the day to enter into the night, bring forth the living from the dead, bring forth the dead from the living, and provide whomsoever You will without measure! There is no god but You!

Glory be to You, O Allah, and Yours is the praise! Who knows Your measure and yet does not fear You? Who knows what You are and yet does not stand in awe of You? Through Your power, You have joined disparate things, through Your gentleness, You have cleaved apart the daybreak, through Your generosity, You have illumined the dark shrouds of night, made waters, sweet and salt, flow forth from hard shining stones, sent dawn out of rain-clouds water cascading, and appointed the sun and the moon a blazing lamp for the creatures without experiencing in that which You originated either weariness or effort.

So, O He Who is alone in might and subsistence and dominates His slaves with death and annihilation, (please) bless Muhammad and his household, the god-fearing, answer my supplication, hear my call, and actualize through Your favor my hope and desire. O Best of those who are called to remove affliction and object of hope in difficulty and ease!

I have stated my need to You; so, do not reject me despairing of Your exalted gifts. O All-generous! O All-generous! O All-generous! By Your mercy, O Most Merciful of the merciful! May Allah bless the best of His creatures, Muhammad, and his entire Household!

The Imam (‘a) would then prostrate and say the following words:

O my God, my heart is veiled, my soul is deficient, my intelligence is defeated, my caprice is prevalent, my obedience is little, my disobedience is much, and my tongue confesses of sinning; so, what am I to do?

O He Who covers defects! O He Who knows the unseen! O He Who removes troubles! Forgive my sins, all of them, in the name of the sacredness of Muhammad and the household of Muhammad! O All- forgiver! O All-forgiver! O All-forgiver! By Your mercy, O Most Merciful of the merciful! 86

Imam Ali (‘a) used to say more supplications in mornings, some of which will he presented hereinafter:

(1) O Allah, this daybreak and I are two of Your creations. O Allah, please do not put me to the test through it, and do not put it to the test through me. O Allah, do not show this daybreak from me any audacity to disobey You or any committing of what You have forbidden from me. O Allah, please keep away from me slipping, hardship, misfortune, hard luck, gloating of the enemies, and evil scene in myself and my property. 87

(2) We being this morning thankful to Allah and begin our evenings praising Him. All praise be to You for we have become Muslims and sound. 88

(3) Welcome, O you the two preserving and noble angels. I will invoke Allah’s blessings on you as you wish, by the will of Allah. 89

(4) O Allah, please make me live and cause me to die following the Book (i.e. the Quran) and the Prophetic traditions. Please, keep me safe from fancies, innovations, deviation, and falsity. Please, protect me from confusion, aberrance, idiocy, ignorance, evil tribulation, sedition, lack of understanding, lack of knowledge, inadvertence because of being connected to (i.e. because of) the long respite, and the prevalence of lusts. Verily, You are All-gentle to what You wish. O most Merciful of all those who show mercy. 90

Supplication In Mornings And Evenings

Many supplications are reported to have been said by Imam Ali ('a) in mornings and evenings. Yet, I will hereinafter quote one supplication only:

O my Lord, please immerse me in the ocean of the light of reverencing to You so that, when I come out of it, my face will have the rays of the illuminations of veneration that will take away the sights of the envious jinn and human beings and blind them against targeting the arrows of envy at the papers of my grace.

O Allah, please shield me behind the screen of light whose interior side is made of light and whose exterior side is made of light, too.

O Allah, I beseech You by Your Brilliant Name and Brilliant Face, O Light of all lights, to shield me in the light of Your Name by the light of Your Name, O All-light. May Allah bless Muhammad and his Household! All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. 91

Confidential Prayers (Munajat)

Imam Ali ('a) spent the nights of his lifetime praying to Almighty Allah confidentially and expressing his love for and belief in Him. One of these confidential prayers reads as follows:

O Allah, I beseech You for security on the day when 'neither wealth nor sons will avail except him who comes to Allah with a heart free from evil.'

And I beseech You for security on the day when 'the wrongdoer gnaws his hands, saying: Ah, would that I had chosen a way together with the Messenger of Allah.'

And I beseech You for security on the day when 'the guilty shall be recognized by their marks; so, they shall be seized by the forelocks and the feet.'

And I beseech You for security on the day when 'a father shall not make any satisfaction for his son nor shall the child be the maker of any satisfaction for his father. Surely, the promise of Allah is true.'

And I beseech You for security on 'the day on which their excuse shall not benefit the unjust and for them is curse and for them is the evil abode.'

And I beseech You for security on the day 'when no soul shall control anything for another soul and the command on that day shall be entirely Allah's.'

And I beseech You for security on the day when 'a man shall fly from his brother, his mother, his father, his wife, and his children. Every person of them shall on that day have an affair, which will occupy him.'

And I beseech You for security on the day when 'the guilty one will fain redeem himself from the chastisement of that day by sacrificing his children, his wife, his brother, the nearest of his kinsfolk who gave him shelter, and all those that are in the earth, wishing then that this might deliver him. By no means! Surely, it is a flaming fire, sagging by the head.'

O Master! O my Master! You are the master and I am the slave; and who can have mercy upon a slave except the master? O Master! O my Master! You are the Lord and I am the servant; and who can have mercy upon a servant except the lord? O Master! O my Master! You are the Almighty and I am the humble; and who can have mercy upon the humble except the Almighty? O Master! O my Master! You are the Creator and I am the created being; and who can have mercy upon a created being except the Creator? O Master! O my Master! You are the All-great and I am the trivial; and who can have mercy upon the trivial except the All-great?

O Master! O my Master! You are the All-powerful and I am the weak; and who can have mercy upon the weak except the All-powerful? O Master! O my Master! You are the All-wealthy and I am the needy; and who can have mercy upon the needy except the All-wealthy? O Master! O my Master! You are the Donor and I am the beggar; and who can have

mercy upon a beggar except the Donor? O Master! O my Master! You are the Ever-living and I am the mortal; and who can have mercy upon a mortal except the Ever-living?

O Master! O my Master! You are the Everlasting and I am the evanescent; and who can have mercy upon an evanescent being except the Everlasting? O Master! O my Master! You are the Eternal and I am the perishable; and who can have mercy upon a perishable being except the Eternal? O Master! O my Master! You are the Provider of sustenance and I am the sustained; and who can have mercy upon a sustained being except the Provider of sustenance?

O Master! O my Master! You are the All- magnanimous and I am the miser; and who can have mercy upon a miser except the All-magnanimous? O Master! O my Master! You are the Healer and I am the subject to diseases; and who can have mercy upon the sick except the Healer? O Master! O my Master! You are the All-big and I am the tiny; and who can have mercy upon a tiny being except the All-big (Lord)?

O Master! O my Master! You are the Guide and I am lost; and who can have mercy upon a lost one except the Guide? O Master! O my Master! You are the All-beneficent and I am the object of Your mercy; and who can have mercy upon the needy for mercy except the All-beneficent? O Master! O my Master! You are the Superintendent and I am the tested; and who can have mercy upon a tested except the Superintendent?

O Master! O my Master! You are the Director and I am the perplexed; and who can have mercy upon a perplexed one except the director? O Master! O my Master! You are the All-forgiver and I am the sinful; and who can have mercy upon a sinful except the All-forgiver? O Master! O my Master! You are the Dominant and I am the overcome; and who can have mercy upon an overcome one except the Dominant?

O Master! O my Master! You are the Raiser and I am the raised; and who can have mercy upon a raised one except the Raiser? O Master! O my Master! You are the All-superb and I am the subservient; and who can have mercy upon a subservient except the All-superb? O Master! O my Master! (Please do) encompass me with Your mercy and be pleased

with me out of Your magnanimity, nobility, and favoring. O Lord of magnanimity, benediction, conferral of bliss, and blessing, in the name of Your mercy, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy! 92

In another confidential prayer, Imam Ali ('a) says,

O my God, roads have become rugged and passersby are thus very few. So, please be my friend in my loneliness and my companion in my seclusion. To You do I complain about my poverty and destitution, and to You do I refer my harshness and neediness, because You are the goal of my hope and the utmost of my request.

How happy the hearts of the cognitive are! How lively the souls of the gnostic are! How excellent end the eagerness of the loving has! It is You in Whose courtyard everyone resides; and for You only all hopes are headed; and in You only are true trusts put.

O He Who is the one and only Perfect, Who has dressed brilliance, Who is Almighty through majesty, and Who does abundant favors, please do not deprive us of Your donations.

O my God, hearts are seeking shelter with You, because You are the utmost goal of the loving. With You only are the hearts seeking refuge in fear of defects. You have always been forbearing although You knew (about the wrongdoings), have always shown mercy although You saw, have always covered up (the defects) although You were fully aware (of them), and have always forgiven although You were enraged. Is there then any other one than You to hope for? Is there any other god than You to be feared? Is there any other worshipped one than You to be prayed?

Is there any foot running towards other than You at hardships? By Your Almighty (I swear), O delight of all souls and utmost goal of all success, I possess nothing but my humiliation, destitution, neediness for You, and sincere confidence in You. I thus run away towards You and I beseech You for what cannot be hidden from You.

If you then pardon me, this will be out of Your favors; if You punish me, this will be justice from You; if You endue me with Your kindness, this

will be due to Your magnanimity; and if You excuse me, this will be due to the perpetuity of Your infinity.

O my God, I swear by the majesty of Your grandeur and I vow by the perpetuity of the everlastingness of Your subsistence that I will never cease sitting at Your door until You grant me security from the sways of Your torment and I will not be content with Your excluding me from the sways of Your torment until I leave, carrying with me Your abundant reward.

O my God, very strange are the hearts that feel at ease with this world and find the comfort of hopes while they knew for sure that the possessions of this world should be eventually gone, its bliss should eventually vanish, its shade should eventually decline, its pillars should eventually slope, the attractive bloom of its beauty should eventually wear out, and whatever is true in it should eventually be proven false. How can they then desire for the comfort of the kingdom of the heavens while they are distracted by love for the perishable things and misled by whims from taking the true path?

O my God, please include us with those whose intellects are passionately adoring the remembrance of You and whose hearts left their places in yearning for You; therefore, the motives of their love for You grasped their hearts, making them prisoners in Your fist.

O my God, how can I praise You, although praising You is one of Your graces, when no utterance can ever express Your Essence, no hearing can ever retain You, no heart can realize You, no idea can comprehend You, no determination can go along with You, and Your reality cannot occur to any mind.

So, please grant me that I should be thankful to You, do not make me secured of Your scheme, do not make me forget remembering You, and give me generously all that which You are the worthiest of giving generously, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy. 93

Three Magnificent Words Of Confidential Prayer

These golden words are reported to have been said by Imam Ali ibn Abi- talib (‘a) in the form of confidential prayer:

O my God, to be a servant of You is the ultimate of my honor and Your being my Lord is the ultimate of my pride. As You are as exactly as I love, please make me as exactly as You love. 94

Supplications For Mercy

Accompanied by the pious Muslims, Imam Ali (‘a) used to come out to a desert when rain stopped and draught befell people. He would pray Almighty Allah humbly and submissively for rain.

In one of his supplicatory prayers for rain, he (‘a) said,

O Allah, please spread Your mercy on us through heavy, sudden rain and splashing clouds; and endue Your servants with ripening of the fruits; and enliven Your servants and lands through the growing of blossoms; and call Your honorable scribing angels to witness for a beneficial and perpetual irrigation of expansive heaviness and immediate, swift, and pouring heavy rain by which You give life to what had died, catch what had been missed, grow what is coming from the yields, and expand for us our livelihoods; clouds that are accumulative, pleasant, enjoyable, and heaped up; the drops of which should not be harmful nor should its lightning be rainless.

O Allah, please water us with rain that is fertile, productive, outgoing, liberal, and heavy, by which You water the animals and meet the gluttony of the greedy.

O Allah, please water us with raindrops due to which hillocks will flow with water, skins of water will be replete, rivers will be gushing forth, trees will grow, prices all over the countries will be lowered, beasts and human beings will be refreshed, plants will sprout, udders (of cattle) will pour out milk, and our power is increased to be added up to Your power.

O Allah, please do not make its heat to be undesirable wind; do not make its coldness to be unremitting; do not make its damage to be like missiles and its water to be salty.

O Allah, please provide us with portions from the blessings of the heavens and the earth. 95

Imam Ali ('a) is also reported to have said the following supplicatory prayer for rain:

O Allah, surely our mountains have dried up and our earth has become dusty. Our cattle are thirsty and are bewildered in their enclosures. They are moaning like the moaning of mothers for their dead sons. They are tired of going to their meadows and longing for their watering places.

O Allah, have mercy on the groan of the groaning and yearn of the yearning.

O Allah, have mercy on their bewilderment and their passages and their groaning in their yards.

O Allah, we have come out to You when the years of drought have crowded over us like a herd of thin camels, and rain clouds have abandoned us. You are the hope for the afflicted and succor for the seeker.

We call You when the people have lost hopes, cloud has been denied, and cattle have died, that do not seize us for our deeds and do not catch us for our sins, and spread Your mercy over us through raining clouds, rain-fed blossoming, amazing vegetation, and heavy down-pours with which all that was dead regains life and all that was lost returns.

O Allah, give rain from You which should be life-giving, satisfying, thorough, wide-scattered, purified, blissful, plentiful and invigorating. Its vegetation should be exuberant, its branches full of fruits, and its leaves green. With it, You reinvigorate the weak among Your creatures and bring back to life the dead among Your cities.

O Allah, give rain from You with which our high lands are covered with green herbage, streams are flowing, our sides grow green, our fruits

thrive, our cattle prosper, our far-flung areas are watered, and our dry areas get its benefit, with Your vast blessing and immeasurable grant on Your distressed universe and Your untamed beasts.

And pour upon us rain which is drenching, continuous and heavy; wherein one cycle of rain clashes with the other and one rain drop pushes another into a continuous chain, its lightning should not be deceptive, its cheek not rainless, its white clouds not scattered, and rain not light, so that the famine-stricken thrive with its abundant herbage and the drought stricken come to life with its bliss. Certainly, You pour down rain after the people lose hopes and spread Your mercy, since You are the Guardian, the praiseworthy. 96

The following is another supplicatory prayer that Imam Ali ('a) said in seeking for rain:

Behold! The earth which bears you and the sky which overshadows you are obedient to their Sustainer (Almighty Allah). They have not been bestowing their blessings on you for any feeling of pity on you or inclination towards you, nor for any good which they expect from you, but they were commanded to bestow benefits on you and they are obeying, and were asked to maintain your good and so they are maintaining it.

Certainly, Allah tries His creatures in respect of their evil deeds by decreasing fruits, holding back blessings, and closing the treasures of good, so that he who wishes to repent may repent, he who wishes to turn away from evils may turn away, he who wishes to recall forgotten good may recall, and he who wishes to abstain from evil may abstain. Allah the Glorified has made the seeking of His forgiveness a means for the pouring down of livelihood and mercy on the people as Allah has said,

'Seek the forgiveness of your Lord! Verily, He is the Most Forgiving. He will send down upon you the cloud raining in torrents, and help you with wealth and children. (17:10-12)'

Allah may shower mercy on him who took up repentance, gave up sins, and hastened in performing good acts before his death.

O Allah, we have come out to You from under the curtains and coverings of houses when the beasts and children are crying, seeking Your mercy, hoping for the generosity of Your bounty, and fearing Your chastisement and retribution.

O Allah, give us to drink from Your rain and do not disappoint us, nor kill us by years of drought, nor punish us for what the foolish among us have committed, O Most Merciful of all.

O Allah, we have come out to You to complain to You about what is already not hidden from You, when the seven troubles have forced us, draughty famines have driven us, distressing wants have made us helpless, and troublesome mischief has incessantly befallen us.

O Allah, we beseech You not to send us back disappointed, nor to return us with down-cast eyes, nor to address us harshly for our sins, nor to deal with us according to our deeds.

O Allah, do pour on us Your mercy, Your blessing, Your sustenance, and Your pity, and make us enjoy a drink which benefits us, quenches our thirst, produces green herbage with which all that was lost gets a growing, and all that had withered comes to life again.

It should bring about the benefit of freshness and copiousness of ripe fruits. With it, plains may be watered, rivers may begin flowing, plants may pick up foliage, and prices may come down. Surely, You are powerful over whatever You will. 97

Supplications At Hardships

Imam Ali (‘a) used to say the following supplication at hardships:

O Allah, You are verily the king; O Oft-forgiving. There is no god save You. I am Your servant. I have wronged myself and confessed of my sins; so, please forgive my sins. There is no god save You, O Oft-forgiving.

O Allah, I praise You and You are the worthiest of being praised for what You have given me exclusively from the donations that cover my desires and the most favorite errands that You have made reach me; and for Your pleasure with which You have endued me and conferred upon me; and for Your enjoyable graces that You have bestowed upon me; and for

Your defense of me; and for Your success granted to me by You; and for Your responding to my prayers so that I am speaking to You confidentially in desire for You, I am beseeching You with pure intention, and I am hoping for You and thus I find You amending all my affairs under all conditions, regarding me in all of my issues, giving me victory over my enemies, forgiving my sins, and covering up my defects. I have never been divested of Your prosperity even for a wink of an eye since You have sent me down to the world of test to see how I should behave and what I should make for the abode of perpetuity.

O Allah, I have been released by You from all misfortunes, hardships, and agonies because of which distress exposed me to unexpected matters and because of which I suffered unbearable tribulations. I remember nothing from You but kind turns and I have seen nothing from You but favoring.

You have granted me all-inclusive welfare. Your favors to me are uninterrupted and Your graces to me are connected. Many a time have You saved me from what I anticipated. You have thus made my expectations about You come true, as You have always been my companion in my journeys.

You have also honored me in my hometown, healed my illnesses, cured me from my diseases, and treated me kindly in my abodes of turmoil and rest. You have never allowed my enemies to gloat over my misfortunes as You always smote those who had smitten me and saved me from the evils of those who incur the animosity to me.

O Allah, O my God, many an enemy unsheathed the sword of his hostility against me, honed his dagger's edge against me, sharpened the heads of his weapons against me, mixed for me his deadly poisons, leveled at me his hitting arrow, and decided secretly to target harm to me and to make

me taste the deadly poison of his bitterness. [Amid all that] You considered that I am too weak to bear hardships, I am too short to have aid against him who aimed at attacking me, and You perceived my loneliness to confront many of those who incurred my hostility and laid in wait for me, while I have not been ready to give any thought to overcoming and retaliating.

So, You, O my Lord, came to stand by me with Your aid, made me strong through Your support, notched his sharpness against me, disappointed him although he concentrated all his troops and crowds, gave me the upper hand over him, and defeated him fatigues and engaged with his own traps. Thus, he could not quench his thirst, did not assuage the fury of his anger, bit his thumb [out of his malice toward me], and turned his back fleeing after You frustrated his pennons and made him fail to achieve his expectations.

O Allah, many a tyrannical oppressor made me the target of his oppressive trickeries, set the traps of his hunting for me, and waylaid me like a beast waylaying its prey and trying to catch its prey, while he was showing me happy mien flatteringly and displaying a cheerful face.

So, when You, O my God, saw the ill intention of his inner self and the ugliness of his determination against me, You threw him down headlong in the very pit which he had dug for hunting me, made him fall in the bottomless depth of his hole, made him turn back on his heels, hurled him with his own stone, slaughtered him with his own arrowhead, suffocated him with his own rope, turned his plot to his own neck, lassoed him with his remorse.

So, he became lowly and dwindled after his arrogance, was crushed after his haughtiness; humble and captured in the lasso of his trap in which he wished to see me. In fact, I was had it not been for Your mercy about to encounter the same as he had encountered. So, all praise be to the Lord Who is invulnerably Omnipotent, the Patron Who is prudently Forbearing, the Self-subsisting Who is never negligent, and the Forbearing Who is never impatient.

I called upon You, O my God, seeking Your shelter, having full confidence in the immediateness of Your response, trusting in that which I am still receiving from You; namely, the excellence of Your defense of me, having full knowledge that whoever harbors under the shade of Your protection will never be persecuted, and whoever takes refuge in the fortress of the seeking of Your support will never be exposed to the strikes of misfortunes. So, You, O my Lord, redeemed me with Your omnipotence and saved me from his prowess with Your bounty and obliging favor.

O my God, many clouds of misfortune You have dispersed, much rain of bliss You have poured, many streams of conferral You have made flow, many springs of troubles You have effaced, many launches of mercy You have spread, many overwhelming calamities You have removed, many armors of wellbeing You have adorned [us with], and many continual events of goodness You have decided. They would never render You impotent when You determined them to happen, and could never stop responding to You when You wanted them to be.

O Allah, many an envier targeted his envy at me, smit me with his sharp tongue, pricked me with the inner corner of his eye, made me the object of his intentions, and gird me with dispositions that are still his.

O Allah, many an excellent hope You have achieved, many breaking poverty You have set and expanded, many blows You have revived (me from them), and many agonies You have relieved (me of them), and many gross neediness You have shunted, and many graces You have allowed me to use. You cannot be questioned concerning that which You do and You are never grudging when You grant. Although You have not been besought, You took the initiative to give.

When Your favoring was asked, You have not withheld. You have insisted on nothing but favoring, bestowal, and granting bounties. But as for me, I insisted on nothing but indulging in acts of disobedience to You, violation of Your prohibitions, transgressing Your limits, passing over Your threats, and obeying Your and my enemy. You have never stopped perfecting Your favors on me and granting successive graces. However, this has not prevented me from committing sins that You dislike.

O my God, this is the situation of one who confesses of failure to carry out his duty towards You, and testifies to Your ample favoring on him and Your excellence deliverance. So, O Allah, O my God, confer upon me that through which I can attain Your mercy, and that which I can take as a ladder by which I ascend to Your satisfaction, and I can be secured from Your wrath. Verily, You do whatever You wish, You judge whatever You want to judge, and You have power over all things.

O Allah, my praise of You is continuous and my extolment of You in perpetually moving from age to age, with the various colors of glorification of You and the various arts of sanctification of You, purely intended for remembering You and for attaining Your pleasure through the genuine confession of Your Oneness, wholesome praise of You, and enumeration of Your bounties that is intended for giving the lie to those who deny You.

You have never been assisted in any item of Your power, You have never been shared in Your Godhead, and You have never been witnessed when You suspended all things on their various instincts and made the creatures on a variety of forms.

Illusions can never penetrate into the screens of Your hidden knowledge so that they may conclude that Your greatness is limited, Your sempiternity is fashioned on a definite way, or Your infinity is possibly comprehended. So, the most profound ideas cannot attain an understanding of You nor can the most reflective skills embrace You.

The views of the most talented thinkers cannot perceive You in the glory of Your omnipotence and the greatness of Your power. The description of Your power is too exalted and the grandeur of Your greatness is too elevated to be likened to the descriptions of Your created beings. Never reducing is that which You decide to augment, and never augmenting is that which You decide to reduce.

None beheld You when You fashioned the creation and none stood by You when You originated the souls. All tongues are too impotent to elucidate Your attribute and intellects are too weak to embrace the essence of recognizing You. How can You be described through attributes or held

in any space while You are the Omnipotent and All-holy Lord Who is eternally and everlastingly perpetual in the unseen world alone without being any one else existent therein and none else can be worthy enough to be there?' 98

Supplication For Steadfastness

Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have prayed to Almighty Allah for steadfastness, saying,

O Allah, please grant me steadfastness with every tribulation, and grant me expression of gratitude (for You) with every grace.

O Allah, when You decide to put me to the test through tribulations, please grant me patience along with these tribulations. Yet, wellbeing is more favorable to me. 99

Whenever a misfortune would trouble him, Imam Ali ('a) used to say the following help-seeking prayer:

I pray for the immunity of the Ever-living King Who never dies. I pray for the protection of the Lord of almightiness, justice, and omnipotence. I pray for the help of the Lord of greatness, power, and kingdom against whatever I fear and whatever concerns me. 100

Distress-Repelling Prayer

Imam Ali ('a) used to refer to Almighty Allah in all times, with a definite prayer that suited the situation. In times of distress and agony, he ('a) prayed to Almighty Allah, saying,

O Allah, please do not endear to me what You hate, and do not make me loathe what is lovable by You.

O Allah, I seek Your protection lest I may be pleased with what arouses Your wrath, or I detest what pleases You, or I reuse Your acts, or I tres-

pass Your Words, or I act sincerely towards Your enemies, or I violate Your orders for their sake.

O Allah, please make me stand steadfastly and do tirelessly any word and act that draw me nearer to Your pleasure and take me aloof from Your wrath, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy.

O Allah, please grant me an oft-remembering tongue, a grateful heart, an honest certitude, a sincere faith, and a humble body. Please, provide me with love for You and fill in my hearts with dread from You.

O Allah, if You show me mercy, then I have already had a nice idea about You. If You otherwise torment me, then this will be a fair punishment for my wrongdoing, prejudice, offenses, and extravagant acts. Then, My excuses will not be admitted, if I make ones, and I will have no right to demand with any reward, if I want to demand with one.

O Allah, when the terms of lifetime terminate, the days of life come to an end, and I have no other way but to present myself before You, please then grant me an abode in Paradise that the past and the last generations will wish to have the like of it an abode that will never bring about regret and there will be no companion like it. Please, make it to be one of the most honorable abodes of Paradise.

O Allah, please attire me with the dignity of the faith-based submission before I am attired with the humility-based submission in Hellfire.

I praise You, O my Lord, with the most excellent praise, because You have always done me the most excellent favors.

O Allah, please make me taste Your aid, support, success, and donation. Please, provide me with eagerness to meet You, and support from You until I can find the sweetness of that in my heart. Please, help me decide on the most successful choice concerning all of my affairs. You verily can see my situation and the situation of my companions, and nothing of my affairs can ever be hidden from You.

O Allah, I beseech You for victory that You granted to Your Messenger and through which You discriminated between the truth and the falsity and You established Your religion and demonstrated Your argument clearly. O He on Whom I depend under all circumstances! 101

Supplicatory Prayers On Seeking Shelter And Protection Of Allah

Imam Ali ('a) used to say the following supplicatory prayer when he was attacked by calamities:

O Allah, Master of the Kingdom! You give the kingdom to whomsoever You please and take away the kingdom from whomsoever You please, and You exalt whom You please and abase whom You please. In Your hand is the good.

Surety, You have power over all thing. You make the night to pass into the day and You make the day to pass into the night, and You bring forth the living from the dead and You bring forth the dead from the living, and You give sustenance to whom You please without measure.

Allah is the Most Great! Allah is the Most Great! Allah is the Most Great! All created beings are submissive to the greatness of His majesty. Every haughty one of them is humble before the greatness of His almightiness.

None of them can ever find a redeemer from Him; rather, He, Allah, causes them to be fugitive, scattered and perishing in the climax of their

tyranny, in the name of: 'Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn from the evil of what He has created, from the evil of the utterly dark night when it comes, from the evil of those who blow on knots, and from the evil of the envious when he envies.' And in the name of: 'Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of men, the King of men, the god of men, from the evil of the whisperings of the slinking (Satan) who whispers into the hearts of men from among the jinn and the men.'

Closed against me is the door of the eager and the laggards amongst you (all); they are thus lost and cast away in the name of Al-Saffat (those drawing themselves out in ranks), Al-Dhariyat (the wind that scatters far and wide), Al-Mursalat (the emissary winds), and Al-Nazi'at (the angels who violently pull out the souls of the wicked).

I deter you all from making any movement. Be ash! Do not extend your hands towards me or towards any believer. 'On that day, We will set a seal upon their mouths; and their hands shall speak to Us; and their feet shall bear witness of what they earned.'

'This is the day on which they shall not speak; and permission shall not be given to them so that they should offer excuses.' All eyes (of the enemies) may be blind, all tongues may be mute, and all necks are nodded down in submission before the Creator King.

O Allah, In beseech You in the name of 'mim', ''ayn', 'fa'', the two 'ha'' the light of the ghosts, the glittering of the light of mornings, and Your management for me, O He Who is All-powerful in going and coming, please save me from the evil of whatever creeps and walks, and whatever acts arrogantly and haughtily.

Allah is the Overcoming. No fugitive can flee from Him. 'Help from Allah and a victory near at hand.' 'Allah has written down: I will most certainly prevail, I and My messengers. Surely, Allah is Strong, Mighty.'

Whoever seeks the shelter of Allah will be secured. There is neither might nor power save with Allah, the All-high, the All-great. 102

Supplicatory Prayer On Seeking Allah's Defense Against The Rivals

The following is another supplication that Imam Ali ('a) composed in praying for Almighty Allah's defense against the tricks of the rivals and enemies:

I seek the defense of the brilliance of the Face of Allah the Eternal and Perfect. I seek the protection of the shield of Allah the Powerful and Encompassing. I smite every one who has acted wrongly towards me with the arrow of Allah and with His fatal sword.

O Allah! O Master of all of His affairs! O He Who stands over all of His creatures! O He Who intervenes between man and his heart! Please, intervene between me and Satan, his schemes, and all of Your servants whom I lack power to confront. Please, stop their tongues from reviling at me, enchain their hands and feet, and establish between them and a dam made from the brilliance of Your greatness, a screen made of Your power, and a host from Your authority. Verily, You are Ever-living and All- powerful.

O Allah, please set a seal over the eyes of the observers so that I can pass, and set a seal over the trickeries of those who plot against me at night and in daylight, and set a seal over the sights of those who scheme evil against me so that I will not care for their watching over me; 'the flash of His lightning almost takes away the sight. Allah turns over the night and the day. most surely, there is a lesson in this for those who have sight.'

In the Name of Allah the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. 'kaf-ha-ya-'ayn- sad.'

In the Name of Allah the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. 'ha-mim. 'ayn-sin-qaf.'

'Like water which We send down from the cloud so the herbage of the earth becomes tangled on account of it, then it becomes dry broken into pieces which the winds scatter.'

'The Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful.'

'The day that draws near, when hearts shall rise up to the throats, grieving inwardly; the unjust shall not have any compassionate friend nor any intercessor who should be obeyed.'

'Every soul shall then know what it has prepared.'

'But nay! I swear by the stars that run their course and hide themselves, and the night when it departs, and the morning when it brightens.'

'Sad! I swear by the Quran full of admonition. Nay! Those who disbelieve are in self-exaltation and opposition.'

Imam Ali ('a) would then repeat the following supplicatory statements three times:

Deformed be the faces! Blind by the sights! Muted be the tongues! I make their good between their eyes, their evil under their feet, and the ring of Solomon between their shoulders.

All glory be to Allah the All-powerful, the Overcoming, the All-sufficing. 'So, Allah will suffice you against them, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing.' 'The baptism of Allah, and who is better than Allah in baptizing? And Him do we serve.' 'kaf-ha-ya-'ayn-sad.' Please, save us. 'ha-mim. 'ayn-sin-qaf.' Please, protect us and have mercy on us. He is Allah; the All-powerful, the Supreme, the All-strong, the All-sufficing.

'And We have made before them a barrier and a barrier behind them; then, We have covered them over; so, they do not see.' 'These are they on whose hearts and their hearing and their eyes Allah has set a seal, and these are the heedless ones.'

May Allah bless Muhammad and his entire Household the pure and immaculate. 'Surely, it is from Solomon, and surely it is: In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Exalt not yourselves against me and come to me in submission.'

O Allah, I do beseech You to grant me my request and to forgive my sins, because none can forgive sins save You, in the name of Your mercy, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy. 'And the faces shall be humbled before the Living, the Self-subsistent Allah; and he who bears iniquity is indeed a failure.' O Ever-living! O Self-Subsistent! O Lord of majesty and honoring! [103]

Supplicatory Prayer For Allah's Protection

Praying to Almighty Allah for protection, Imam Ali ('a) says,

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; He is the Resurrecting, the Inheritor.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; He watches every soul as to what it earns.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; He said to the heavens and to the earth, 'Come both, willingly or unwillingly.' They both said, 'We come willingly.'

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; neither slumber nor sleep can overtake Him.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; He is the All-beneficent Who has full authority over the Throne. He knows the stealthy looks and what is hidden in breasts.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; His are whatever is in the heavens, whatever is on the earth, whatever is between the two, and whatever is under the dust.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; He can see but He can never be seen while He is in the Most Exalted Prospect. He is the Lord of the last and the first.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; all things are submissive to His kingdom.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; all things are humbling themselves before His greatness.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; He is near although He is All-exalted, Most High although He is near, and Mighty through His absolute authority.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; He is the most excellent Maker, the All-elevated, the Ever-living, the Perpetual, the Eternal Who is never extinct.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; no language can ever describe His all-powerfulness.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; He is the Ever-living, the Self-subsistent; neither slumber nor sleep can overtake Him.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; He is the All-clement, the All-munificent, the Lord of majesty and honoring.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; He is the One, the One and Only, the Single, the Besought of all; He begets not nor is be begotten, and there is none like Him.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; He is the most Generous of all of the generous, the All-great, the Most Great, the All-high, and the Most High.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; in His Hand lies all goodness, and He has power over all things.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; all those who are in the heavens and in the earth glorify Him and are subservient to Him.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; He is the Ever-living, the All-wise, the All-hearing, the All-knowing, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful.

I seek the protection of Allah save Whom there is no god; in Him do I put my trust, and He is the Lord of the Great Throne.

In the Name of Allah the All-beneficent, the All-merciful.

O Allah, I do beseech You, although You know my request better than I do. I ask from You, although You know my question better than I do. I

desire for You, and You are the ultimate of my desire.

O He Who is the knower of all secrets, the Raiser of the heavens, the Fender of misfortunes, the Target of all requests, and the Grantor of all demands, please bless Muhammad the Seal of the Prophets and bless his Household, the pure and immaculate.

O Allah, please forgive our wrongdoing and our transgression against our duties towards You in all of our affairs and in what You know better than we do.

O Allah, please forgive my offenses and my intentional, unintentional, funny-intended, and serious faults, because I have committed all of these categories of faults.

O Allah, please forgive me my past, coming, overt, and covert sins. You are the Grantor of precedence and postponement. You have power over all things. 104

Supplicatory Prayers On Distinctive Days

Thursday nights (laylat Al-jumu'ah) are distinctive nights of blessings. It is highly recommended to spend them with devotional and charitable acts.

At Thursday nights, Imam Ali ('a) used to repeat the following supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, I beseech You for mercy from You by which You guide my heart, reunify my affairs, unite my scattered matters, guard my absent ones, set aright the affairs of my present ones, purify my deed, inspire me to follow uprightness, and protect me from all evils.

O Allah, please grant me true faith, pure certitude, and mercy by which I can attain the honor of Your dignity in this world and the other world.

O Allah, I beseech You for winning in Your predetermined affairs, ranks of scholars, life of the happy, and victory over the enemies.

O Allah, I am stating to You my needs, even though my deed is weak. I thus need for Your mercy. I beseech You, O settler of all issues and healer of all breasts; just as You set a barrier between the two seas, so also please rescue me from the torture of the flaming fire, from the pleading for destruction, and from interrogation in the grave.

O Allah, as for all items or things that my request could not cover and my hope could not attain, and as for any item of prosperity with which You have promised any of Your servants but my plea did not include, please I desire for all of that from You.

O Allah, O Lord of the strong rope and Lord of right-directing commands, I beseech You for security on the Day of Threatening and for Paradise with those ones who are drawn near to You, the witnesses, the frequently genuflecting and prostrating to You, and the faithful to their covenants. Verily, You are All-merciful and All-loving and You do whatever You will to do.

O Allah, please cause us to be guiding, well-guided, neither straying off nor misleading; and make us at peace with Your saints and at war with Your enemies; and make us love the repentant ones and incur the hostility of those who oppose You, because You are their enemy.

O Allah, this is our prayer and we are waiting for Your response. This is our effort and we put our trust in You.

O Allah, set light in my heart, light in my grave, light before me, light beneath me, light over me, light in my hearing, light in my sight, light in my hair, light in my skin, light in my flesh, light in my blood, and light in my bones.

O Allah, please magnify light for me. All glory be to the One Who wears magnificence and Who is honorable due to His magnificence. All glory be to Him save Whom none deserves to be glorified. All glory be to the Lord

of favoring and granting of graces. All glory be to the Lord of magnificence and honor. All glory be to the Lord of majesty and honoring. 105

Supplicatory Prayer On The Eid Al-Fitr Night

The night before the ‘´d Al-Fitr Day (i.e. the first of Shawwal; the first day on which the obligatory fasting of the month of Ramadan is broken) is also one of the blessed nights which is highly recommended to be spent with devotional acts.

At this night, it is recommended to offer a two unit prayer reciting, in the first unit, Surah Al-Fatihah once and repeating Surah Al-Tawhid one thousand times and reciting, in the second unit, Surah Al-Fatihah once and Surah Al-Tawhid once only.

After accomplishment, it is recommended to prostrate and say the following words: atubu ila’llahi (I turn repentant unto Allah). After that, the following supplicatory prayer, which is reported from Imam Ali (‘a), should be said:

O Lord of favoring and magnanimity! O Lord of favoring and bounty! O He Who has selected Muhammad, peace of Allah be upon him and his Household, (please do) send blessings to Muhammad and his Household.

Then, one may pray for the granting of one’s personal needs.

Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) reported that when Imam Ali Amir Al-Mu'minin (‘a) used to offer this prayer, he would say,

‘I swear by Him Who grasps my soul in His Hand; Almighty Allah shall definitely respond to whomever offers this prayer and then prays Him for granting his needs, and Almighty Allah shall forgive him even if his sins would be as much as the pebbles in deserts.’

Upon accomplishing this prayer, Imam Ali (‘a) would say the following supplicatory prayer:

O Allah! O Allah! O Allah! O Beneficent! O Allah! O Merciful! O Allah! O Sovereign! O Allah! O Most Holy! O Allah! O Peace! O Allah! O Giver of security! O Allah! O All-prevailing! O Allah! O Almighty! O Allah! O Omnipotent! O Allah! O All-great! O Allah! O Creator! O Allah! O

Inventor! O Allah! O Shaper! O Allah! O All-knowing! O Allah! O Great! O Allah! O Knowing! O Allah! O All-generous! O Allah! O Indulgent! O Allah! O Wise! O Allah! O Hearer! O Allah! O Seer! O Allah! O Near! O Allah! O Responder! O Allah! O All-magnanimous! O Allah! O Glorious! O Allah! O Rich and Powerful! O Allah! O Sincere! O Allah! O Lord-Master!

O Allah! O Judge! O Allah! O Swift! O Allah! O Firm! O Allah! O Compassionate! O Allah! O Preserver! O Allah! O Mighty! O Allah! O Protector! O Allah! O Encompassing! O Allah! O Chief of the chiefs! O Allah! O Ever-Foremost! O Allah! O Eternally Last! O Allah! O Evident! O Allah! O Intrinsic Fundamental! O Allah! O Glorious! O Allah! O Victor! O Allah! O Oft- nourishing! O Allah! O Oft-nourishing! O Allah! O Oft-nourishing! O Allah! O Loving! O Allah! O Light! O Allah! O Raiser!

O Allah! O Preventing! O Allah! O Defender! O Allah! O Introducer! O Allah! O Bountiful! O Allah! O Magnificent! O Allah! O Handsome! O Allah! O Witness! O Allah! O Present! O Allah! O Succoring! O Allah! O Beloved! O Allah! O Creator out of nothing! O Allah! O Purifier! O Allah! O Master! O Allah! O All-powerful! O Allah! O Possessor! O Allah! O Spreader! O Allah! O Vivifying! O Allah! O Exterminator! O Allah! O Causer! O Allah! O Inheritor! O Allah! O Bestower! O Allah!

O Favorer! O Allah! O Benefactor! O Allah! O Truth! O Allah! O Distinct! O Allah! O Affable! O Allah! O Polite! O Allah! O Graceful! O Allah! O Originator! O Allah! O He Who brings back all things! O Allah! O He Who makes visible! O Allah! O Inventor! O Allah! O Guide! O Allah! O Able! O Allah! O Efficacious! O Allah! O High! O Allah! O Great! O Allah! O Tender! O Allah! O Kind! O Allah! O Owner of bounties! O Allah! O Allah! O Most High! O Allah! O Just!

O Allah! O Owner of ascendancy! O Allah! O Truthful! O Allah! O Sincere! O Allah! O Requiting! O Allah! O He Who remains for ever! O Allah! O Vigilant! O Allah! O Owner of majesty! O Allah! O Owner of glory! O Allah! O Admirable! O Allah! O Adorable! O Allah! O Maker! O Allah! O Helper! O Allah! O Doer! O Allah! O Active! O Allah! O Subtle! O Allah! O Oft-forgiving! O Allah! O Very Thankful! O Allah! O Splendid! O Allah! O Omnipotent! O Allah! O Oft-nourishing! O Allah! O Oft-nourishing! O Allah! O Oft-nourishing! O Allah! O Oft-nourishing!

O Allah! O Oft- nourishing! O Allah! O Oft-nourishing! O Allah! O Oft-nourishing! O Allah! O Oft-nourishing! O Allah! O Oft-nourishing! O Allah! O Oft- nourishing! O Allah! I beseech You to send blessings to Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, favor on me with Your pleasure, grant me amnesty through Your munificence, and expand Your lawful, good sustenance to me from whence I expect and from whence I do not, for I am Your servant, I have no one else other than You, and there is no one to whom I turn to other than You! O Most Merciful of the Merciful! Only that which Allah wills takes place. There is no power except in Allah the All- high and All-great.

After that, the Imam (‘a) would prostrate himself and say the following supplicatory words:

O Allah! O Allah! O Allah! O Oft-nourishing! O Oft-nourishing! O Oft- nourishing! O He Who sends down blessing! To You only are all desires turned.

I beseech You in the name of every name treasured in Your invisible collection, and in the name of Your celebrated names, inscribed on the hangings of Your Throne, to send blessings to Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, to accept my offerings made in the month of Ramadan, to record my name in the list of those who will journey to Your Sacred House, to overlook my grand sins, to demonstrate, O Lord, before me Your treasures, O All-beneficent! 106

Supplicatory Prayer On The Mid-Rajab Day

On the fifteenth of Rajab, that is one of the blessed days. Imam Ali (‘a) used to say the following supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, O He Who humiliates all the tyrants! O He Who dignifies the believers! Verily, You are my Shelter when all courses mislead me and You are the Maker of my creation out of Your having mercy upon me, while You have never needed to create me.

Were it not for Your mercy, I would be of those who perish. You are my backer against my enemies, and were it not for Your support, I would be of those who are exposed. O He Who sends mercy from its origin! O He Who originates blessings from their centers!

O He Who has given Himself exclusively disdain and elevation; therefore, His saints feel dignified out of His Honor! O He for Whom all kings have put the yoke of humiliation on their necks; they are therefore fearful of His supremacy!

I pray You in the name of Your Entity from which You have derived Your Pride, I pray You in the name of Your Pride from which You have derived Your Dignity, I pray You in the name of Your Dignity by which You have been firmly established on the throne of authority; so, You have created all Your creatures who are, as a result, submissive to You. [I pray You to] send blessings upon Muhammad and upon his Household.

The Imam (‘a) would then submit his requests.[107]

Supplicatory Prayer In Sha’ban

In the month of Sha’ban, Imam Ali (‘a) used to say the following supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, (please do) send blessings to Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, listen to my prayer whenever I pray You, listen to my call

whenever I call upon you, and accept from me whenever I confidentially whisper to You, for here I am fleeing into You, standing before You, showing submission to You, imploring You, and hoping for the reward

that You have. You do know what is in my inner self, recognize my needs, recognize my hidden affairs, and all my moves and stillness are known by You.

So are all the utterance which I want to begin with, all the requests that I want to express, and all the expectation that I hope for my future. All that which You, O my Master, have decided for me up to the end of my life, including my secret and open matters, shall be experienced by me. And it is in Your Hand, not anybody else's, are all increase and decrease, and all my benefits and harms that come upon me.

O my God, if You deprive me (of Your sustenance), then who else can ever provide me with sustenance? If You disappoint me, then who else can ever back me?

O my God, I do seek Your protection against Your wrath and against the befalling of Your ire upon me.

O my God, if I do not deserve Your mercy, You are still expected to confer upon me with Your expansive favor.

O my God, I now imagine how I will stand before You, shaded by my good idea about You on account of my trust in You, and You will decide for me that which befit You and You will include me with Your forgiveness.

O my God, if you pardon me, then who else is worthier than You are in pardoning. If my time of death is approaching while my deeds are still too short to approach me to You, I am then considering my confession of being guilty to be my means towards You.

O my God, I have wronged myself when I allowed myself to behave unrestrainedly; therefore, woe will betide me if You do not forgive.

O my God, You have never ceased Your favors from me all over my lifetime; so, (please) do not stop Your favors from covering me after my death.

O my God, how can I despair of Your nice custody over me after my death while You have not shown me but the good throughout my lifetime?

O my God, (please) manage my affairs in the very way that befits You, and confer upon me a sinful who is covered by his ignorance with Your favors.

O my God, You have concealed my sins in my worldly life, but I need Your concealment more urgently in the Next Life. You have thus not disclosed my sins before any of Your righteous servants; therefore, (please) do not expose me on the Resurrection Day before all the witnesses.

O my God, it is Your magnanimity that expanded my hope, and surely Your pardon is more preferable than my deeds.

O my God, so (please) delight me when I meet You on the day when You shall judge between Your servants.

O my God, I submit to You the apology of one who cannot dispense with the acceptance of his excuse; so, (please) accept my excuse, O most Magnanimous of all those before whom the guilty make an apology.

O my God, (please) do not reject my request, do not fail my big hope for

You, and do not disappoint my desire and expectation for You.

O my God, had You wanted to humiliate me, You would not have guided me (to You). Had You decided to disclose me, You would not have saved me.

O my God, I do not expect You to reject my request that I spent my whole lifetime asking for it from You.

O my God, all praise be to You, forever, forever, perpetually, everlastingly, increasingly, and without perdition, as exactly as You like and please.

O my God, if You punish me for my offense, I shall demand with Your pardon, if You punish me for my sins, I shall demand with Your forgiveness, and if You decide to send me to Hell, I shall declare to its inhabitants that I love You.

O my God, if my deed is too little when compared to the true obedience to You, then my hope for You is too big when compared to my prospect from You.

O my God, how can it be that I return from You with disappointment and deprivation while I expect, depending upon Your magnanimity, that You will endow me with safety and mercy?

O my God, I have spent my whole lifetime with the vigor of being negligent to You and I have spent my whole youth with the inebriety of being far away from You.

O my God, I have not thus woken up to myself during the period when I seductively felt safe from Your punishment and when I was taking the path that ends with Your ire.

O my God, nevertheless, I am Your servant and the son of Your servant now standing before You and begging You in the name of Your generosity. O my God, I am, being Your servant, disowning all that with which I used

to face You; namely, my shameless inconsideration of You, and I am hereby appealing for Your pardon since pardon is one feature of Your generosity.

O my God, I had no strength by which I would rid myself of the acts of disobedience to You except after You aroused me to love You. Hence, I have become as exactly as You want me to be. I have thus thanked You, for You have included me with Your generosity and You have purified my heart from the filths of being inattentive to You.

O my God, (please) look at me in the same way as You have looked at one whom You called and he has responded to You and whom You have con-

ferred with Your aid and he thus has obeyed You. O He Who is too close to depart from one who is inadvertent to Him! O He Who is too magnanimous to deprive one who hopes for His reward!

O my God, (please) grant me a heart whose longing for You will approach it to You, a tongue whose truthfulness is directed to You, and a sight whose righteousness advances towards You.

O my God, he who recognizes You shall never be anonymous, he who seeks Your shelter shall never be disappointed, and he whom is attended by You shall never be boring.

O my God, he who abides by Your Path shall be enlightened, and he who resorts to You shall be succored. I am thus having recourse to You, O my God! So, (please) do not disappoint me as regards Your having mercy upon me and do not divest me of Your kindness.

O my God, grant me, among those who show servitude to You, the position of one who (incessantly) longs for more love for You.

O my God, (please) inspire me with passionate love for ceaseless reference to You, and (please) devote all my pursuit to my attaining the delight of the success that is achieved through Your Names and the amount of Your Holiness.

O my God, I beseech You in Your name to put me in the position of those who are obedient to You and in an honorable standing of Your pleasure, for I, verily, have no power to rescue or to benefit myself.

O my God, I am Your servant the feeble and sinful and Your slave the penitent. So, (please) do not include me with those against whom You have turned Your face or those whom are deprived of Your pardon because of their inattentiveness to You.

O my God, (please) grant me absolute devotion to You and illuminate the sights of our hearts with the light of observing of You so that the sights of the hearts will penetrate the Screens of Light and arrive at the

Core of Magnificence, and that our souls hang to the Majesty of Your Holiness.

O my God, (please) make me of those who responded to You when You called at them, those who were shocked for Your Majesty when You observed them and You have thus taken into their confidence and they acted for You openly.

O my God, I have shaded neither despair nor gloom over my good idea about You and I have never lost hope in Your excellent magnanimity.

O my God, if my sins have overthrown me in Your sight, then please pardon me for my excellent trust in You.

O my God, if my wrongdoings have caused me to lose Your honorable kindness, then my belief in You has called my attention to the generosity of Your sympathy.

O my God, if my inadvertence has screened me against readying myself for meeting You, then my recognition of the generosity of Your bounties has awakened me.

O my God, if Your grave chastisement has drawn me to Hellfire, then Your opulent reward has drawn me to Paradise.

O my God, You alone do I pray and You alone do I implore and desire. I beseech You to bless Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad and to include me with those who always mention You, who never breach their covenant to You, who never fail to thank You, and who never belittle Your Affairs.

O my God, (please do) take in me with the most brilliant Light of Your Dignity so that I will recognize You and I will leave everybody else, and that I will be fearful of and careful with You. O Lord of Majesty and Honor! May Allah send blessings to Muhammad, His Messenger, and upon his Household the Infallible, and exalt them very much. 108

Supplications On The Days Of The Week

Supplicatory Prayer On Saturdays

Imam Ali (‘a) used to say the following supplicatory prayer on Saturdays:

All praise be to Allah Who has connected my wishes to His forgiveness, has spread on my desires with His mercy, and has strengthened my back and the shoulders by His Generosity and Recognitions.

He has not left me without obligation and favors when I was involved in sins and disobedience, when I was negligent to His obedience, and when I have not fulfilled the right of fear of Him and of His chastisement as His graces were incessantly poured on me and His favors were manifestly done to me.

All glory be to Allah on Whom all believers rely, to Whom all those who deny Him have to return, and with the favors of what He has none can dispense.

There is no god except Allah Who is attentive to the one who is negligent about Him, Who accepts the repentance of one who does sins excessively, Who is displeased with one who has lost hopes of His vast blessings and mercy.

Allah is the Most Great; He is the creator and lord of all things, and the annihilator and destroyer of all things.

Allah is the Most Great; He is as great as He deserves and merits.

O Allah, please bless Muhammad Your servant, prophet, messenger, trustworthy, and pure and noble witness, and bless Muhammad’s Household, the pure and immaculate.

O Allah! I beseech You the beseeching of one who has confessed his sins, regretted following his evil desires. You are the most Dependable of all those in whom trust is put and You are the most Hoped to pardon and confer forgiveness upon those who have wronged themselves. My sins have thrown me in the depths of perdition and my offenses have surrounded me, disabling me from getting rid of them.

You are the Most Hoped and upon You only is our dependence at times of hardships and times of joy. You are also the haven of the fearful drowned, as You are more clement than any kind person is. O my Master, I am now turning my face towards You, for You are the ultimate goal of those who turn to You and the most merciful of all those whose mercy is sought for excusing the sinful ones.

O Allah, verily, forgiveness of sins and relief from agonies are never big for You to do, since You are the All-knower of the unseen, the coverer up of all defects, and the reliever from agonies, as You are the Eternal and the All- merciful and You have attired Yourself with Lordship and You are unique in Godhead.

O my God, I seek nearness to You in the name of the expansiveness of Your mercy that has comprehended all things. O my Lord, You see my place, have full acquaintance with my inner self, know my secrets, and nothing of my affairs can hide itself from You, as You are closer to me than my own jugular vein are.

So, please, accept my repentance in such a way that I will never return to doing what enrages You ever again, and please forgive me with such forgiveness that prevents me from returning to acts of disobedience to You, O Noblest of all the noble ones.

O my God, You alone have set aright the hearts of the corruptive and thus they followed uprightness due to Your setting them aright. So, please set me aright with Your setting aright. You alone have favored on the straying off ones when You, through Your guidance, guided them to the truth against straying off.

You alone have guided those who had denied You, following off courses, and thus You led them to the true course. As You set aright their devious slips, You granted them love for You, made them avoid disobedience to You, included them with the forgiven ones, and made them occupy the position of the winners. So, I beseech You, O my Master, to include me to them, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy.

O Allah, I beseech You to bless Muhammad and his Household and to provide me with sustenance that is expansive, legally gotten, and pleasant along with wellbeing that You may confer upon me, as well as a deed that draws me close to You, O Best of all the besought ones!

O Allah, I earnestly entreat You with the entreaty of one who confesses of his faults and I thus declare my repentance before You, O Oft-returning with mercy; so, please do not reject me with disappointment from gaining Your abundant donations, O most liberal Bestower! You have always forgiven the sinful generously and covered up the hideous deeds of Your servants, O All-majestic! O High Exalted!

I turn my face towards You, asking You in the name of those whom You bound Yourself with duties towards them, since I have not had any item of decency in the name of which I may ask You; and my sins intervened between me and the good- doers; and my deeds have not given me the opportunity to accompany the prophets. So, please, O my master, do not reject my asking You in the name of those.

O my Lord, will You disappoint me while You are my one and only hope? Will You reject me empty-handed of Your pardon while You are the ultimate goal of my desire?

O He Who is always Existent and Who is well-known for His magnanimity, and all the creatures are only servants of Him, and all affairs are eventually returned to Him, please bless Muhammad and his Household, bestow me generously with Your good turns that suffice the nearby, the far away, the enemies, the brothers, and the sisters; and please attach me to those whom You have whelmed with Your liberal bounties and honor and with Your favors and conferrals of honor, and whom You have made pure, pious, dutiful, and virtuous and thus they became the neighbors of

Your Prophet in Your abode. Please, forgive me and forgive the believing men and women along with our fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters. O most Merciful of all those who show mercy. 109

Supplicatory Prayer On Sundays

On Sundays, Imam Ali ('a) used to say the following supplicatory prayer:

All praise be to Allah for His forbearance and clemency. All praise be to Allah, for I know that my sin, no matter how grand it is, is insignificant if compared to His pardon, and my offense, no matter how hideous it is, is slight if compared to His mercy.

All glory be to Allah Who has raised the skies without posts, made the Paradisiacal abodes without ending time, and created the creations without need for an assistant or a helper.

There is no god save Allah Who has warned those who stubbornly disdained from obeying Him and insolently violated His commands, Who has put on alert those who persistently engaged themselves in disobedience to Him and arrogantly refused to serve Him, and Who has already presented His excuses with regard to those who went too far in error and deviation so that His argument is made plainly against them and because He has already known their bad end result.

Allah is the Most Great; He is the All-magnanimous and the All-generous Whose eternal kindness and abundant conferral of favors on all of His creatures have no end, nor is there any last part to His power and authority over His beings.

O Allah, please exalt Muhammad and his Household and bless them in the best way You have ever exalted and blessed Abraham and the Household of Abraham. Verily, You are Owner of praise, Owner of glory.

O Allah, I beseech You the beseeching of a sinful one whose acts of disobedience to You have led him to the most restricted courses and thus he has none to rescue except You, none to hope for but You, none to come to

his aid more compassionate to him than You are, and none to depend on save You.

You are my Master Who has granted graces generously before they are deserved and Who has given such graces to those who are not qualified to gain them. Refraining from generous grant has never increased Your almightiness. Your generous gifts have never tired You. The persistent beseeching has never made Your abundant donning expire; rather, You are providing Your servants with sustenance on account of Your bountiful favors to them.

O Allah, all statements are too ill-expressed to praise You adequately. All tongues are too erroneous to circulate Your praiseworthy deeds and favors.

I have now come to You, intending none but You, even if my sins are surrounding me, because You are the most Merciful of all those who show mercy, the most Magnanimous of all those who act magnanimously, the most Generous of all those who show generosity, the most Excellent of all those who provide sustenance, the Best of all creators, the First, the Last, the Evident, and the Immanent; and You are too majestic, almighty, and gentle to reject one who puts his hope and expectation in You and wishes to gain what You have in possession fervently.

So, all praise be to You, O Worthiest of all praise. O Allah, I have wronged myself when I wanted to decide for it, and I felt secured from the vicissitudes of days when I committed sins. You are the patron of favoring and the Lord of majesty and honoring.

Now, nothing remained to amend my affairs but Your regard for me; so, please set aright my affairs with success and regard them nicely through prosperity. You are verily the most liberal Bestower, the All-benevolent, and the Lord of elegances, favors, and lenience. O Cleaver of the daybreak, please grant me my request, even though I do not deserve so. O All-forgiving!

O Allah, I beseech You by Your Name through which all acts are put into effects, and by Your almightiness through which all managements

are made perfect, to bless Muhammad and his Household, to provide me with sustenance that is abundant, legally gotten, and pleasant out of Your favors, and not to intervene between me and whatever draws me near You. O All-affectionate! O All-favoring.

O Allah, please include me with those whom You have given Your forgiveness, pardon, and pleasure and whom You have allowed to dwell in the gardens of Your Paradise out of Your compassion, bounteous favor, and donating.

O my God, as You conferred honor on Your saints, You bound Yourself with safeguarding them and put them under the shade of Your custody against the successive falling in perditions. I am Your servant; so, please save me, attire me with wellbeing, and lead me to the obedience to You, and ward me off from transgression against You and from acting disobediently towards you.

All voices with different languages are clamoring to You, beseeching for the requests for which they hope so that You may erase their defects and forgive their sins. O Knower of all of the hidden things!

O Allah, I implore You for guidance; so, please guide me. I seek Your protection; so, please protect me and help me carry out my duties towards You. You are verily the Worthiest of being feared and the Worthiest of forgiving.

Please, keep away from me the evils of every evil one and change them into the prosperity of what is owned by none save You. Please, make me carry out my duties towards fathers and mothers, and forgive me as well as all the believing men and women, brothers, and sisters, kinsmen and kinswomen. O Patron of blessings and knower of all secrets! 110

Supplicatory Prayer On Mondays

On Mondays, Imam Ali (‘a) used to say the following supplicatory prayer:

All praise be to Allah Who has guided me to Islam, honored me with faith, granted me insight in the religious affairs, conferred credit on me with certitude, and made known to me the truth from which they are turned away and the great news about which they are in disagreement.

All glory be to Allah Who provides with sustenance both the biased and the unbiased and the reasonable and the ignorant, and shows mercy to the inattentive and the negligent, not to mention the suppliant and the prayerful.

There is no god save Allah Who has full awareness of the transgressing servants of Him Who try to run away from Him so that they may retreat from their insolence and arrogance, and Who accepts pleasantly from the repenting and the sincere although they do not exert all their efforts in repenting to Him and acting sincerely towards Him.

Allah is the Most Great; He is the Forbearing, the All-knowing, Who has a manifest portent in each category of His amazing creation and wonderful making that makes unavoidable to believe in His Godhead. There is a clear indication and fair witness in each class of His mysterious measures and excellent management that necessitates His being the One and Only Lord.

O Allah, I beseech You O He Who wards off all misfortunes, knows all hidden things, and gives abundantly the beseeching of one who has regretted the commitment of sins and felt secured from the vicissitudes of days and night when he committed acts of disobedience to You; but now, he cannot find any other one than You to forgive him these sins and cannot find any other haven than You to resort to, hoping for relieving him from his neediness.

O All-majestic Lord! Your obliging favors have included all Your creatures, Your all-embracing mercy has overshadowed all of them, and Your abundantly given graces have covered all of them. O He Who is Oft-returning with generosity, All-magnanimous, and most liberal Bestower; and retaliator with painful torment upon those who disobey Him!

I am beseeching You with confession of having wronged myself, because I have not found any other haven to resort to for forgiving the sins that I made than You. O He Who is the Best of all those who may be beseeched for meeting the desired needs and the Best of all those who may be hoped for relieving the hardships! All faces are submissive to You; so, please do not reject me with deprivation. Verily, You do whatever You wish and You judge whatever You will.

O my God, Master, and Lord! For which lord may I hope or to which god may I turn my face when regret encompasses me and my acts of disobedience and the calamities of the anticipated punishments surround me, while You are the Patron of excusing and the abode of generosity?

O my God, will You put me in the position of the exposed ones while You are the most excellent in covering up? Will You interrogate me about my commitment of sins in the presence of the witnesses while You have known the secrets that I have hidden?

O my God, if I have wronged myself extravagantly and sinned against it when I violated the inviolabilities and I was negligent of the slippery offenses that I have done, then You are so Gentle that You always show.

Your mercy to the extravagant out of Your liberality and You always confer Your pardon on the wrongdoers out of Your generosity. So, please have mercy on me, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy.

O my God, You always soothe the horrors of the hearts of the fearful through Your compassion, achieve the hopes of the expectant through Your bounteous donation, and pour down Your plentiful gifts on those who do not deserve them. Please, secure me through despair-free expectation and hope that is not mixed with despondency. O He Who encompasses all things with His knowledge.

O my Master, in my morns and eves, I am begging at the doors of Your grants and refusing to pose my requests before any other one than You; and it is not part of Your excellent favoring that You may reject an imprisoned and distress beggar who is desperately waiting for Your familiar goodness.

O my God, illusions are too failing to comprehend You and tongues are too halting to describe Your Essence. In the name of Your bounties and munificence, please bless Muhammad and his Household, forgive my sins, endue me out of Your profuse favors with sustenance that is abundant, legally gotten, and pleasant along with wellbeing, and overlook my slips, O He Who is the utmost desire of the hopeful,

Omnipotent of the heavens and the [layers of the] earth, Everlasting after the extinction of all of the creatures, and Master on the Judgment Day! You, O my Lord, are the trust of those who lose confidence in themselves because of their overdone defects, the hope of those who have lost hope because of their numerous slips, and the expectation of those who lack expectation for themselves because of their deeds.

O my God, please save me, out of Your mercy, from perditions; and deliver me, O my Master, from the narrow paths; and allow me to dwell in the abode of the virtuous; and make me in the company of the righteous; and forgive me the sins that I have committed at night and in daylight,

O He Who is fully aware of all secrets; and help me, O my Master, carry out on behalf of me, as well as my brothers and sisters, the duties that You have made incumbent upon me towards fathers and mothers, out of Your gentleness and generosity, O Lord of majesty and honoring; and grant us a share in the prayers of the believing men and women whose prayers are responded by You. Verily, You are All-knowing, All-magnanimous, All- generous, and All-donning. May Allah send peace and perfect blessings upon Muhammad and his Household.

Supplicatory Prayer On Tuesdays

On Tuesdays, Imam Ali (‘a) used to say the following supplicatory prayer:

All praise be to Allah Who has bestowed on me deep-rooted recognition, sincerity, and profession of His Oneness, and Who has not included me with the people of deviation, idiocy, doubt, and polytheism and with

those over whom Satan has gained mastery and thus seduced and misled them, making them betake their whims as their gods.

All praise be to Allah Who responds to the distressed, releases from harms, knows the secrets, and controls good and evil.

There is no god save Allah Who acts back forbearingly when He is disobeyed by one of His servants and receives him with aid and response when the servant prays to Him.

Allah is the Most Great; His realm is expansive, partnership of Him is nonexistent, His Throne is glorious, and His sway is intense.

O Allah, I beseech you the beseeching of one who cannot find any other one to beseech than You and I depend upon You the depending of one who cannot find any other one to depend upon than You, because You are the First Who originated the beginning and created it with the hands of Your tenderness and it thus submitted itself to Your volition and came to being as exactly as You had willed for it to be through Your well-established measure. You are such Almighty and Majestic that intellects cannot comprehend the reality of Your description.

You are the All-knowing from Whom the weight of an atom cannot be hidden in the earth or in the sky. You are the All-magnanimous Who cannot be made tightfisted by the persistence of those who pray to Him excessively earnestly; rather, when You want something to be, You only order it to be, and it will definitely come to pass.

Your order is effective, Your promise unavoidable, and Your judgment fair. Nothing can be hidden from You and all things are eventually returned to You.

As You screened Yourself with Your bounties, You cannot be seen. You witness all confidential talks, You are high exalted in the highest position, You are Unique in Your grandeur, and You are Almighty by Your all- powerfulness and sempiternity. All praise be to You in the last and the first, and all thanks be to You in the beginning and the end.

You O my God are Forbearing, All-powerful, All-kind, All-forgiving, King, Omnipotent, Sustainer, excellent Maker, Responsive, and All-hearing. The forelocks of the servants and the sides of the lands are under Your control, and You are Ever-living, Self-subsisting, All-magnanimous, All-glorious, All-generous, and All-merciful.

You, O my God, is the Possessor Who had all kings under His domination; therefore, all the mighty ones are submissive to Your sublimity and Your saints are subserviently obedient to You. Through Your Godhead, You merit all glory and commendation. Maintenance of Your creatures never overburdens You.

You are also the Knower of all the unseen; You have thus covered up my defects, counted all of my sins, conferred honor upon me by making me recognize Your religion, and You have neither ripped apart Your nice covering of me, O All-tender, nor have You exposed me, O All-munificence.

I thus beseech you to bless Muhammad and his Household, to provide me with sustenance that is abundant, legally gotten, and pleasant out of Your profuse favoring, to forgive me the sins that have intervened between You and me when I committed them, for You are worth enduing me with Your all-inclusive mercy liberally.

I beseech You to save me from Your painful torment, to include me with those honored by You, and to attach me, O my Master, to the righteous ones whom shall be received by the angels in good conditions, saying to them, 'Peace be upon you all! Enter Paradise for what you used to do.' Let all that be in the name of Your pardon and Your encompassing me with Your mercy, O All-compassionate and All-merciful!

O my God, I also beseech You to bless Muhammad and his Household, to help me carry out my duties towards fathers and mothers and meet their rights, to attach me and them as well as the believing men and women to the pious ones, and to forgive them and me. Verily, You are full of praise and full of glory. May Allah bless Muhammad and his entire Household! [111]

Supplicatory Prayer On Wednesdays

On Wednesdays, Imam Ali (‘a) used to say the following supplicatory prayer:

All praise be to Allah Whose pleasure lies in beseeching Him and asking for what He has in possession, and Whose wrath lies in refraining from entreating Him earnestly.

All glory be to Allah Who witnesses all confidential meetings due to His knowledge and Who is unlike any corporeal thing in His Essence.

There is no god save Allah Who cannot be realized by eyes and visions, cannot be ignored by reasons and intellects, and cannot be nonexistent in the inner selves. He knows the stealthy looks and what is concealed in breasts.

Allah is the Most Great; He is too majestic to have the attributes of the created beings and He is full aware of what is in the hearts of all of the creatures.

O Allay, I beseech You the beseeching of one who is never fed up with praying to his God. I entreat You as earnestly as the entreaty of a drowned who hopes for being released from his agony. I implore You the imploration of one who is repentant from his sins and wrongdoings.

You are the All-compassionate Who dominated all of His creatures, made them species of various colors and abilities according to Your will, and measured their terms of lifetime and their sustenance.

The creating of any creation has never been difficult for You; so, You fashioned the creation as You willed. You are thus too exalted and too omnipotent to have an assistant, You are too almighty to consult a partner, You are too holy to beget a son, and too sacred to touch women. Visions are never to comprehend You, and illusions are never to realize Your Essence. You have no partner, no peer, no match, and no like.

You are the Unique, the One, the Everlasting, the First, the Last, the All-knowing, the One and Only, the Independent, and the Subsisting. You beget not nor are You begotten, and there is nothing similar to You.

You cannot be described by any description, cannot be comprehended by any illusion, and cannot be changed by any vicissitude of any age. You were and You are always Eternal. Your knowledge about hidden things is the same as Your knowledge about the open and overt things.

O He to Who all the great ones are humbling themselves! O He to Whose almightiness all chiefs are submissive! O He Whose Essence cannot be adequately expressed by the tongues of all of the eloquent ones! O He Who has managed all things with ultimate precision! O He Whose comprehension cannot be attained by the statements of the most well- versed scholars!

O my Master, will You torment me in the Fire while You are my hope? Will You allow the Fire to consume me after I have professed Your Oneness, expressed my submission to and fear of You by means of prostrating myself before You? Will You cause my tongue to fail to express my state in the situation of Judgment after You, out of Your favors to me, have made it accessible for me to glorify, praise, and venerate You?

O Ultimate goal of the seekers, Security of the fearful, Support of the distressed, Aide of the seekers of aid, Shelter of the seekers of shelter, Remover of the harms of the agonized, Lord of the worlds, and most Merciful of all those who show mercy! Please, bless Muhammad and his Household, admit my repentance, attire me with wellbeing, provide me with abundant sustenance out of Your favors, and make me of those who frequently turn to You in penitence.

O Allah, if You have recorded me as wretched with You, then I beseech You in the name of the objects of dignity in Your mercy and in the name of the grandeur and greatness of You that neither any arrogant nor can any great one oppose, to bless Muhammad and his Household and to turn me into a happy one.

Verily, all things are run by You according to Your volition and You always protect and none can protect from You; and You have power over all things; and You are the All-compassionate, the All- merciful, the All-aware; and You know what is in my inner self but I do not know what in Yours.

Verily, You are the knower of all unseen things. So, please be kind to me, for You have many times been kind to those who wronged themselves extravagantly. Please, confer upon me with Your obliging favors, for You have many times favored those who are bewilderedly drowned in the oceans of their wrongdoings when their frequent slips gave them up to perdition.

Please, grant me Your bounties, for You grant Your bounties to the sinful through Your lenience and pardon. You have always practiced doing favors to the wrongdoers and pardoning those who slip and those whose audacity to commit offenses made them inevitably dwellers of the abode of perdition.

O He Who knows the hidden and the secrets! O Omnipotent! O Overcomer! Please, help me, as well my brothers and sisters, carry out my duties towards fathers and mothers and meet their rights, O Lord of majesty and honoring; and forgive the believing men and women. Verily, You have power over all things. 112

Supplicatory Prayer On Thursdays

On Thursdays, Imam Ali (‘a) used to say the following supplicatory prayer:

All praise be to Allah Whose innumerable favors, unforgettable bounties, and unconcealed gifts are existent along with every breath of air, every recollection, every moment of our lives, and every state.

All glory be to Allah Who overcomes the strong, supports the weak, amends the broken, enriches the poor, accepts the little, gives abundantly, and has power over all things.

There is no god save Allah Whose graces are copious, Whose wisdom limitless, Whose arguments overwhelming, Whose mercy all-inclusive, and Whose protection givable.

Allah is the Most Great; He is the Lord of invulnerable authority, elevated erection, excellent making, and swift reckoning.

May Allah bless Muhammad, the best of prophets, and his immaculate Household, and may He pour on them magnificent benedictions!

O Allah, I beseech You the beseeching of one who is afraid of his situation in the gathering for Judgment, fearful of exposing his defects, worried about the horrible results of the Resurrection, exposed to sudden attacks, regretting his wrongdoings, responsible for them, eventually liable to account where he will be either rewarded or punished; one who cannot be hidden from You by any place, who cannot find any place to flee except to You, who disavows and thus resorts to You from his evil deeds, who confesses of his grand sins, who is surrounded by grief, to whom the spacious areas are narrow, who is certain of death, and who is hastening to declare his repentance before it is too late, if You only accept his repentance out of Your bounteous favoring and pardon him.

O my God, You are my hope when I lose hope with any other one than You, and You are my haven when I find no other place to resort to than You. You, O my Master, are the One in Your Almightiness and Exaltation, You are the Unique in Your Oneness and Sempiternity, and You are the Almighty Who uniquely enjoys glory. All praise be to You, O my God. No place can cover from You, and no age or time can change You.

You have united the scattered parties through Your gentleness, rendered the split things through Your power, lit the murk of night through Your generosity, made waters, sweet and salt, flow forth from hard shining stones, sent down out of rain-clouds water cascading, made the sun for the creatures to be a shining lamp, and made the moon and the stars to be constellations, without experiencing any fatigue or weakness when You created them.

You are the God and Creator of all things, and the Omnipotent and Sustainer of all creatures. The true dignified is only he whom You dignify; the true humble is only he whom You humiliate; the true happy is only he whom You make happy; the true wretched is only he whom You make wretched; the true rich is only he whom You enrich; and the true poor is only he whom You deprive.

You are my Patron and my Lord; and my sustenance is in Your Hand; and my forelock is under Your control. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household, do to me what befits You, and pour forth Your favors on a servant of You who is sinking in his ignorance and overcome by negligence until he felt secured from the changes of days and thus committed the prohibitions and the sins.

So, O my Master, please make me a servant who resorts to repentance, because repentance is the haven of the sinful; make me dispense with the created beings by Your liberal magnanimity; do not make me in need for the evil people; and grant me Your pardon at the situation of the Judgment Day. Verily, You are the most Merciful of all those who show mercy, the most Magnanimous of all those who act magnanimously, and the most Generous of all those who are known for generosity.

O He to Whom belong the Most Excellent Names and the Highest Parables and Who is the Omnipotent of the heavens and the [layers of the] earth! For You only have I headed in expectation; so, please do not make me return from Your brilliant donations empty-handed. You are verily All- magnanimous and All-munificent. O He Who is compassionate with the servants and Who watches them, I beseech You to bless Muhammad and his Household, to grant me stuffed rewards, to make my return (to You) pleasant, to cover up my defects, to forgive my sins, and to save my, out of Your favors, O my Lord, from the painful punishment. Verily, You are All-magnanimous, All-generous, and most liberal Bestower.

The good and the bad deeds have cast me between reward and punishment, and I now hope that You, out of Your kindness, immerse Your servant, who confesses of having committed enormous faults, in Your magnanimity and generosity, O Forgiver of sins, and to excuse his slips, because, O my Master, I do not have any other God to hope for than You

and I do not have any other Lord to beseech for amending my poverty and destitution than you. So, please do not reject me along with disappointment, O He Who overlooks slips and relieves from agonies!

O my God, please give me pleasure, because I am not the first to have been given pleasure by You, O Patron of all graces, Intense in punishment, and Perpetual in glory and honor! Please, give me exclusive forgiveness that no misery can match and exclusive pleasure that no harm can reach; and inspire me with fear of You and love for You; and keep me away from the perishing acts of disobedience to You; and do not give the Fire authority over me. Verily, You are the Worthiest of being feared and the Worthiest of forgiving.

I have besought You, and You have promised of response; so, please do not frustrate Your beseecher, do not disappoint Your asker, and do not reject the one who puts his hope in You, O Best of all those in whom hope may be put!

I beseech you in the name of Your kindness, mercy, uniqueness, and Godhead, O He Who has power over all things and Who encompasses all things, please save me from what has distressed me, both this-worldly and the other-worldly issues, for You are verily Hearer of prayers and gentle to what You wish.

Please, make me with those whom You had decided incumbently to dwell in the abode of Your honoring with Your elite servants and those whom You give special abundant donations in the ranks of the gardens of Your Paradise upon whom Your have bestowed favors from among the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous; and a goodly company are they.

As for the duties that You have made obligatory upon me towards fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, please help me carry them out properly, and forgive me and them as well as the believing men and women. Verily, You are Nigh, Responsive, and Ample in giving blessings; and doing so is easy to You, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy. May Allah send blessings and thorough benedictions upon the Prophet Muhammad and upon his Household. [113]

Invocations Of Allah's Curse And Punishment On The Enemies

Imam Ali ('a) had to suffer unbearable tribulations from his enemies and rivals who rebelled against the truth and deterred him from putting into action his programs of social reformation and ultimate justice.

Invocation Of Punishment On The People Of Quraysh

The bitterest enemies of Imam Ali ('a) were the people of Quraysh who harbored a grudge against him in the same way as they did with the Holy Prophet (S).

On more than one occasion, Imam Ali ('a) invoked Almighty Allah's curse and punishment on the people of Quraysh, saying,

O Allah, please impose Your punishment on the people of Quraysh on behalf of me, because they have ruptured my family relationships with them, helped each other against me, deterred me from having my due, and usurped the authority that was given to me by my brother (i.e. the Holy Prophet) and handed it over to those who have neither the like of my close family relation with the Messenger nor the like of my precedence to Islam, unless one claims falsely what I do not know and what Allah, as much as I know, does not know. However, all praise be to Allah under all circumstances. 114

O Allah, please wreak disgrace on the people of Quraysh, for they have deprived me of my right and usurped my position from me. 115

Invocation Of Allah's Punishment On Talhah And Al-Zubayr

Talhah and Al-Zubayr rallied people against Imam Ali (‘a) and launched a war against him. Invoking Almighty Allah’s punishment on them, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

O Allah, Talhah ibn ‘Ubaydullah had sworn allegiance to me with his own right hand, but he then breached! O Allah, please descend torture swiftly upon him and never grant him respite.

O Allah, Al-Zubayr ibn Al-’Awwam has ruptured my kinship ties with him, broken the pledge he had made to me, and supported my enemy against me, while he knows for sure that he is wronging me. Please, save me from his evils as You wish and when You wish. 116

Invocation Of Allah’s Punishment On Busr Ibn Arta'ah

Busr ibn Arta'ah, one of the excessive offenders and murderers, was commissioned by Mu’awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan to invading the regions that were under the control of Imam Ali’s government. He then marched towards Yemen and committed massacres, killing innocent people and capturing women.

When the Imam (‘a) was informed about the crimes of Busr, he invoked Almighty Allah’s punishment on him, saying,

O Allah, Busr has sold his religion with this-worldly pleasures, violated all inviolabilities and preferred obedience to a corrupt created being to gaining what You have in possession.

O Allah, please do not cause him to die before You deprive him of sanity and do not show him Your mercy even for a moment.

O Allah, please curse Busr, ‘Amr (ibn Al-’As), and Mu’awiyah. May Your wrath afflict them; may Your punishment be poured down on them; and may they be affected by Your disaster and pestilence that You never keep away from the guilty people. 117

Invocation Of Allah's Punishment On The Khawarij

The rebellion of the Khawarij was the most difficult hardship that faced the government of Imam Ali, because these people not only prevented him from achieving victory over his most vehement enemy; namely, Mu'awiyah, but they also made mischief and committed horrible crimes, convulsing the stability of the Imam's government.

Invoking Almighty Allah's curse and punishment on the Khawarij, Imam Ali ('a) said,

O Allah, Lord of the much-frequented Fane, the elevated canopy, the swollen sea, and the Decree inscribed, I beseech You for victory over those who abandoned Your Book behind their backs and separated themselves from the community of Ahmad (the Prophet) in mutiny against You. 118

On another occasion, Imam Ali ('a) invoked Almighty Allah's curse upon the Khawarij, saying,

O Allah, You have declared one path of Your paths, made Your pleasure to be attained by following this path, ordered Your saints to follow it, and made it the most honorable path in rewarding, the worthiest in return to You, and the dearest course to You. You then bought of the believers their persons and their property for this, that they shall have Paradise; they fight in Your way, so they slay and are slain; a promise which is binding on You.

So, please include me with those who bought themselves from You in this course and then fulfilled their covenants made to You neither breaching, nor breaking any pledge, nor changing their attitude; rather, they only seek the fulfillment of Your promise, the attainment of Your affection, and nearness to You. So, please bless Muhammad and his Household, make this the seal of my deeds, provide me with a situation that is in-

tended purely for You and by which You may make me attain Your pleasure bindingly and release me from wrongdoings.

Please, make me of those who are alive and provided (i.e. after they are martyred) at the hands of the disobedient enemies under the standard of the truth and the pennon of true guidance, advancing towards supporting them, neither absconding nor doubting. At that situation, I implore for Your protection against committing any sin that frustrates my deeds. 119

Invocation Of Allah's Curse Upon The Enemies

Invoking Almighty Allah's curse upon some enemies, Imam Ali ('a) said,

O Allah, I seek protection with You lest I may incur the animosity of one of Your saints, befriend one of Your enemies, or be pleased with a thing that brings about Your wrath.

O Allah, whomever You bless, then may our blessings be upon him; and whomever You curse, then may our curses be upon him.

O Allah, as for one whose death achieves relief for us and for all the believers, please relieve us from him and give us in exchange for him one who is better than him so that You will show us response to our prayer in our faiths and livelihoods, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy. 120

Imam Ali's Invocation Of Allah's Punishment Upon Those Who Refrained From Supporting Him

The majority of people abandoned Imam Ali ('a) and refrained from supporting him. Invoking Allah's punishment upon them, the Imam ('a) said,

O Allah! Whoever listens to our utterance which is just and which seeks the prosperity of religion and the worldly life and does not seek mischief, but rejects it after listening, then he certainly turns away from supporting You and desists from strengthening Your religion.

We make You a witness over him and You are the greatest of all witnesses, and we make all those who inhabit Your earth and Your skies witness over him. Thereafter, You alone can make us needless of his support and question him for his sin. 121

Supplicatory Prayers In Battlefields

On account of his unmatched piety, faithfulness, and godliness, Imam Ali (‘a) did not make any step before he had known for sure that it would please Almighty Allah. In every moment of his lifetime, he mentioned Almighty Allah sincerely and dedicated all of his deeds to Him.

In battlefields, Imam Ali (‘a) did not stop referring to Almighty Allah with the most eloquent phrases of praise and glorification, since his participations in battles were sincerely devoted to pleasing the Lord and winning His rewards.

Since supplication is inseparable part of the devotional acts, Imam Ali (‘a) used to say such supplications even in the most difficult hours of fighting. Let us now present some of his supplicatory prayers in battlefields:

Supplicatory Prayers In The Battle Of The Camel

When Imam Ali (‘a) was informed that the mutinous forces had occupied the city of Al-Basrah, he led his army thereto. Once he entered the city, he prayed to Almighty Allah with the following supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, Lord of the skies and whatever they shade, Lord of the layers of the earth and whatever they carry, and Lord of the Great Throne! I beseech You for the welfare and prosperity of Al-Basrah and I implore for Your protection against its evils. O Allah, please make us dwell in it the best dwelling, and You are the Best to cause to alight.

O Allah, these people (i.e. the rebels) have violated obedience to me, transgressed me, and breached their pledge of allegiance to me. O Allah, please spare the bloodshed of Muslims. 122

Immediately before the breaking out of the war, Imam Ali ('a) said the following supplicatory prayer:

O Best of all those before whom hearts are disclosed and Best of all those supplicated with tongues! O Best Awarder! O Ample in giving! Please, judge between us and our people with true justice; and You are the Best of all judges. 123

When the rebels insisted on fighting against the Imam ('a), he sent them some messengers of peace among whom was a young man. However, the rebels stabbed the young man to death.

Upon this situation, Imam Ali ('a) raised his hands towards the sky and said,

O Allah, toward You only are all eyes gazed, all hands extended, all hearts disclosed, and all deeds intended. Please, Our Lord! Decide between us and our people with truth; and you are the best of deciders. 124

When all attempts of peacemaking failed, Imam Ali ('a) stopped in the center of the battlefield and said the following supplicatory prayer:

'O Allah, I seek Your protection against cowardice at situations of the affliction of horrors, against weakness at encountering the heroes, and against sins that frustrate the deeds; lest, I may stop because of a doubt or proceed without certitude. Then, my efforts will be worthless and my deeds unaccepted. 125

Supplicatory Prayers In The Battle Of Siffin

When Imam Ali (‘a) decided to march toward Syria for fighting against Mu’awiyah the mutinous, he said the following supplicatory prayer while he was riding on his animal:

O Allah, I seek Your protection from the hardships of journey, from the grief of returning, and from the scene of devastation of property and folks. O Allah, You are the companion in journey and You are one who is left behind for (protection of the) family. None except You can join these two, because one who is left behind cannot be a companion in journey nor one who is in company on a journey can at the same time be left behind. 126

When his troops moved from Al-Nukhaylah toward Syria, Imam Ali (‘a) said the following supplicatory prayer:

All praise be to Allah when night spreads and darkens; all praise be to Allah whenever the star shines and sets; and all praise be to Allah Whose bounty never misses and Whose favors cannot be repaid. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and we are of the witnesses of this. I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. May Allah send blessings and benedictions upon him and his Household! 127

When fighting started in Siffin, Imam Ali (‘a), marching and bearing the standard, said this supplicatory prayer:

In the Name of Allah; the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. There is neither might nor power except with Allah the All-high and All-great. O Allah, You alone do we worship and Your aid alone do we seek. O Allah! O All- beneficent!

O All-merciful! O One and Only! O Besought of all! O God of Muhammad! All feet and moved toward You; all hearts are disclosed before you; all sights are gazed at You; all necks are extended to You; all requests are made to You; and all hands are raised toward You.

O Allah, decide between us and our people with truth; and You are the best of deciders. There is no god but Allah. Allah in the Most Great. There is no god but Allah. Allah is the Most Great. There is no god but Allah. Allah in the Most Great. 128

At the night of the most violent encounter in the Battle of Siffin, which is known as laylat Al-harir, Imam Ali (‘a) prayed to Almighty Allah, saying,

O Allah, I implore for Your protection lest I may be oppressed under Your authority.

O Allah, I implore for Your protection lest I may be led astray in spite of Your guidance to the truth.

O Allah, I implore for Your protection lest I may suffer neediness while Your enrichment is available.

O Allah, I implore for Your protection lest I may be lost under Your safety from loss.

O Allah, I implore for Your protection lest I may be overcome, while the whole matter is Yours and under Your control. 129

On the days of the most violent encounters, Imam Ali (‘a) said the following supplicatory prayer:

O Allah! O All-beneficent! O One! O Besought of all! O God of Muhammad! O Allah, all feet and moved toward You; all hearts are disclosed before you; all hands are raised toward You; all necks are extended to You; all sights are gazed at You; and all requests are made to You.

O Allah, we complain to You about the absence of our Prophet may Allah bless him and his Household and the numerousness of our enemies and the scattering of our tendencies. Please, Our Lord! Decide between us and our people with truth; and you are the best of deciders. 130

Supplicatory Prayers On Miscellaneous Issues

At Mealtimes

Ibn A'bad (or Ibn Aghyad, according to some reference books) reported that

Imam Ali ('a) asked him,

Do you know what your duty towards food is?

'What is that duty?' asked the man. Imam Ali ('a) answered,

Its duty is to say the following prayer before eating:

In the Name of Allah (I begin). O Allah, please bless us in what You have provided us as sustenance.

Imam Ali ('a) then added,

Do you know how to thank (Allah) for the food after you finish?

'What is that?' the man asked. Imam Ali ('a) instructed,

To thank for the food is to say this:

All praise be to Allah Who has given us food and drink. 131

At Going To Bed

Imam Ali ('a) used to say the following supplicatory prayer whenever he went to sleep:

In the Name of Allah. I put my side for the sake of Allah, following the faith of Abraham, the religion of Muhammad, may Allah send blessings and benediction upon him and his Household, and showing loyalty to

those the obedience to whom has been made incumbent upon us by Allah. Only what Allah wills shall come to pass, but what Allah does not will shall never come to pass. 132

At Waking Up

When he woke up, Imam Ali (‘a) used to say this supplicatory prayer:

Sufficient to me is the Lord against the servants. Sufficient to me is He Who is sufficient to me. Sufficient to me is He Who has incessantly been sufficient to me. Sufficient to me is Allah; and He is the most excellent Patron. 133

Imploration For Allah’s Safeguard From Showing Off

Because showing off cancels the rewards of the deeds, Imam Ali (‘a), the most sincere to Almighty Allah in all of his words and deeds, used to seek Almighty Allah’s protection against showing off by saying,

O Allah, I seek Your protection from this that I may appear to be good in the eyes of the people whilst my inward self may be sinful before You, and that I may guard myself from sins only for showing off before the people although You are aware of all about me. Thus, I appear before the people in good appearance although my evil deeds are placed before You. This means achieving nearness to Your creatures but remoteness from Your pleasure. 134

Supplication At Receiving Praise From People

To be praised and extolled by people was one of the most abhorrent matters for Imam Ali (‘a). Whenever he was praised, he used to say this supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, You surely know me better than I myself do about myself and I know myself better than all others do. O Allah, please make me better than what they think of me and forgive me what they do not know about me. 135

At Marketplaces

Whenever Imam Ali (‘a) entered the marketplace, he used to say and order his companions to say the following supplication:

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah; One and Only and having no associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. O Allah, I seek Your safety from losing deals and perjury, and I seek Your safety from stagnancy. 136

Upon Looking Into Mirrors

Whenever he looked into a mirror, Imam Ali (‘a) used to say the following supplication:

All praise be to Allah Who created me perfectly, formed me perfectly, gave me perfect things that others have had imperfect, and honored me with Islam. 137

Supplication For Retaining The Holy Quran

Imam Ali (‘a) used to pray to Almighty Allah for retaining the Holy Quran with the following supplication:

O Allah, please have mercy on me to avoid, forever, disobeying You, as long as You will keep me alive; and have mercy on me against being burdened with that which does not concern me; and grant me beautiful appearance in that which pleases You from me; and hold my heart on memorizing Your Book as You have taught me. Please, confer upon me the opportunity to read it the way it will make You please with me.

O Allah, please give light with Your Book to my eyes, open thereby my chest, enlighten with it my heart, free up with it my tongue, make my body work for it, and strengthen me thereby. There is no helper in this task except You; there is no god but You. 138

Supplication Taught To Imam Al-Hasan

Imam Ali ('a) taught his son Imam Al-Hasan ('a) to say the following supplicatory prayer:

O He Who is my only means when I am agonized! O He Who is my aide against hardships! O Grantor of my requests! O He Who is my haven when I am involved in troubles! O my Redeemer when I am exposed to perdition! O He Who saves me when I am alone!

Please, forgive me my wrongdoing, make easy my affairs, bring together my reason, grant success to my requests, set aright all of my matters, save me from whatever distresses me, and make relief and way out for my conditions, and do not separate between wellbeing and me as long as You keep me alive and when You will make me meet You in the Hereafter; (let all that be) in the name of Your mercy, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy! 139

Supplication Taught To Imam Al-Husayn

Imam Ali ('a) also taught his son Imam Al-Husayn ('a) to say the following supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, I praise You for all of Your graces, I thank You for all of Your good turns, I implore Your for forgiving all of my sins, I beseech You to endue me with a part of every item of prosperity, and I seek Your protection against all tribulations. There is neither might nor power except with Allah, the All-High and All-great. 140

Supplication For Sustenance

Beseeching Almighty Allah for sustenance, Imam Ali (‘a) said,

All praise be to Allah Who has introduced Himself to me but has not left me blind-hearted. All praise be to Allah Who has made me of the people of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his Household. All praise be to Allah Who has made my sustenance lie in His Hands, but has not made it lie in the hands of people. All praise be to Allah Who has covered up my defects and has not exposed me among the creatures. 141

Supplicatory Prayer At Funerals

Imam Ali (‘a) said the following prayer whenever a dead body is put in a grave in his presence:

In the Name of Allah, and following the religion of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his Household. O Allah, please expand the grave of this dead, fill it (i.e. the grave) with light, and join him (i.e. the dead person) with his Prophet while You are pleased with him, but not wrathful. When dust was thrown on the dead body, the Imam (‘a) would say this supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, (this is on the basis of the) belief in You, giving credence to Your messengers, and believing certainly in Your resurrection. This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us, and Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth. 142

Supplication When Passing By Graves

Imam Ali (‘a) used to stop at the graves, whenever he passed by them, and say the following words:

Peace be upon you, O dwellers of the lonely abodes and the derelict quarters; the believing men and women and Muslim men and women! Verily, You have preceded us to these abodes and we will most surely follow you and very soon join you. O Allah, please forgive them and us and absolve them and us. 143

Supplication For Abstinence From Worldly Pleasures

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have said the following supplicatory prayer, seeking Almighty Allah to help him refrain from being engaged in the worldly pleasures:

O Allah, I beseech You for inattention to this worldly life and abhorrence to it, because, indeed, its prosperity is little, its poverty overwhelming, its felicity turbid, its new shabby, its missed things never recovered, and whatever is gained in it is test except for those whom You grant protection and show mercy.

Please, do not make me of those who are satisfied with this world and who feel secured from its vicissitudes and put confidence in it. Verily, it will unavoidably betray him who feels secured with it and it will seduce him who puts his confidence in it. 144

In this connection, Imam Ali (‘a) also used to say the following supplicatory prayers:

O Allah, please take me to You while I am poor; and never take me to You while I am rich; and include me with the group of the destitute. 145

On the other hand, Imam Ali (‘a) also prayed to Almighty Allah to give him sustenance from which he would give alms for His sake. He thus used to say,

O Allah, I beseech You to give me part of the worldly sustenance that helps me set aright my words, guard my chastity, fulfill my responsibilities, build good relationships with my relatives, and merchandise for my Hereafter. 146

Supplication For Good Wife

Imam Ali (‘a) is reported to have instructed those who intend to marry to offer a two-unit prayer and, upon accomplishment, pray

to Almighty Allah with the following supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, please provide me with a wife who is good, amiable, fertile, grateful, content, and jealous. If I treat her nicely, she will thank me. If I may make a mistake, she will forgive me. If I mention Allah the All- exalted, she will help me. If I show negligence, she will remind me (of what I have neglected).

If I leave her, she will guard her chastity. If I am with her, she will give me pleasure. If I order her to do something, she will obey. If I put her under an oath, she will fulfill it. If I may be angry with her, she will please me. O Lord of majesty and honoring! 147

Supplication For Repelling Hardships

Imam Ali ('a) very often repeated the following supplicatory prayer:

All praise be to Allah Who made me such that I have not died nor am I sick, nor have my veins been infected with disease, nor have I been hauled up for my evil acts, nor am I without progeny, nor have I forsaken my religion, nor do I disbelieve in my Lord, nor do I feel strangeness with my faith, nor is my intelligence affected, nor have I been punished with the punishment of peoples before me.

I am a slave in Your possession, I have been guilty of excesses over myself. You have exhausted Your pleas over me and I have no plea (before You). I have no power to take except what You give me, and I cannot evade except what You save me from.

O Allah, I seek Your protection from becoming destitute despite Your riches, from being misguided despite Your guidance, from being molested in Your realm, and from being humiliated while authority rests with You.

O Allah, let my spirit be the first of those good objects that You take from me and the first trust out of Your favors held in trust with me.

O Allah, we seek Your protection from turning away from Your command or revolting against Your religion, or being led away by our desires instead of by guidance that comes from You. 148

Supplication For Prosperity

Beseeching for mercy and illumination from Almighty Allah, Imam Ali (‘a) used to say the following supplicatory prayer:

O Allah, I beseech You, O Lord of the souls passing away and the rotten corpses! I beseech You in the name of the obedience of the souls that are restored to their bodies, and in the name of the obedience of the corpses that join their organs, and in the name of the splitting of the graves to send out their dwellers, and in the name of Your Word that is effective on them, and in the name of Your judging justly among them when the other creatures will be standing before You, awaiting the decisions of Your judgment, seeing Your authority, fearing Your punishment, and hoping for Your mercy; on the day on which a friend shall not avail his friend aught, nor shall they be helped, save those on whom Allah shall have mercy.

Surely, He is the Mighty, the Merciful. I beseech You, O All-beneficent, to place light in my sight, strong belief in my heart, and reference to You night and day on my tongue as long as You keep me alive. Verily, You have power over all things. 149

Supplicatory Prayer At The Hour Of Death

When death came upon Imam Ali (‘a), he was repeating statements of remembering Almighty Allah and saying the following supplication:

O Allah, please save us from Your accursed enemy.

O Allah, I beseech You to witness for me that I bear witness that there is no god save You. You are the One and Only and the Besought of all and You beget not nor are You begotten, and there is none match to You. All

praise be to You in the same amount of Your favors to me and Your kind acts to me. So, please forgive me and show me mercy, for You are the Best of all those who may show mercy.

'There is no god save Allah; One and Only and having no associate. Muhammad is His servant and messenger.' These words are my means at the current situation and the situations to follow.

O Allah, please make me join him (i.e. the Holy Prophet) and never intervene me from meeting him. Verily, You hear all prayers and You are All-compassionate, All-forgiving, and All-merciful. 150

- 1. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Al-Amali, pp. 137; 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 10:54-6.
- 2. Al-Tabrisi, Al-Ihtijaj 1:307-8.
- 3. Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 10:59-60.
- 4. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 10:60-2.
- 5. Shaykh Al-Saduq, 'Uyun Akhbar Al-Ridha 2:57.
- 6. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal, pp. 456.
- 7. Idris is a prophet who probably appeared in the period between the appearances of Prophet Adam and Prophet Noah. However, on the basis of some similarities, Prophet Idris may be Enoch that is mentioned in the Bible.
- 8. Imam Ali ('a) then mentioned many other examples of people who could regain health by the blessing of the Holy Prophet (S).
- 9. Sa' is a unit of mass or weight, usually used for grains; one sa' is equal to approximately three kilograms.
- 10. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 10:28-48; Al-Tabrisi, Al-Ihtijaj, pp. 111-20.
- 11. Al-Tabrisi, Al-Ihtijaj 1:358-84.
- 12. Al-Tabrisi, Al-Ihtijaj 1:329.
- 13. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 10:126-8.
- 14. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, 1:138.
- 15. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:468.
- 16. Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 2:208.
- 17. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:468.

- 18. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:468.
- 19. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:468.
- 20. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:468.
- 21. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:473.
- 22. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:473.
- 23. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:477.
- 24. Muhammad Taqi Al-Isahani, Mikyal Al-Makarim 2:347.
- 25. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 7:29.
- 26. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 7:28.
- 27. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 312.
- 28. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 7:80.
- 29. Ibn Shu'bah Al-karrani, Tuhaf Al-'Uqul, pp. 123.
- 30. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 361. This saying has been also reported, through a valid chain of authority, from Imam Al-Sadiq
  ('a). Refer to Jami' Ahadiih Al-Shi'ah 15:239, H. 13.
- 31. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Thawab Al-A'mal, pp. 85.
- 32. Shaykh 'Abbas Al-Qummi, Mafatih Al-Jinan 2:1055 (the two-volume complete English version, translated by Badr Shahin, published by Ansariyan Publications ñ 2009).
- 33. Sayyid ibn Tawus, Muhaj Al-Da'awat, pp. 111-4; 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 91:231
- 34. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-'Alawiyyah, pp. 74-76.
- 35. Shaykh Ibrahim Al-Kaf'ami, Al-Balad Al-Amin, pp. 92-4.
- 36. Shaykh Ibrahim Al-Kaf'ami, Al-Balad Al-Amin, pp. 380-1.
- 37. Shaykh Ibrahim Al-Kaf'ami, Al-Balad Al-Amin, pp. 378-80.
- 38. Sayyid Ibn Tawus, Muhaj Al-Da'awat, pp. 106-11.
- 39. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 225.
- 40. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 6:180-2. Also ascribed to Imam Ali ibn Al-Husayn Zayn Al-'Abidin ('a), this supplicatory prayer is one of the supplications of Al-Sahifah Al-Sajjadiyyah.
- 41. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 91:95; Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 2:253.
- 42. Sayyid Ibn Tawus, Muhaj Al-Da'awat, pp. 94-6.

- 43. Tearing apart safeguards means to remove the protection of the Lord from the servant who commits these sins. More precisely, the sins that tear apart safeguards, according to the words of Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq ('a), are namely consuming intoxicants, gambling, engagement in excessive joking in order to make others laugh, forbidden amusement, engagement in finding faults with people, and sitting with people who doubt Almighty Allah, besides many others.
- 44. The sins that draw down adversities, according to a discourse reported from Imam Al- Sadiq ('a) are: breaking the vows and pledges, committing indecencies openly, spreading lies among people, issuing verdicts that are in violation of the judgment of Almighty Allah, refraining from defraying the zakat tax, and defrauding in measurements.

  The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said, 'Five for five!' When he (S) was asked for explanation, he said, '

  There is no god but You! Glory be to You, and Yours is the praise! I have wronged myself, free hand over them. 2When they commit adultery, Allah will spread death among them. (3) When they tell lies and judge against Allah's rule, they will be increasingly unfortunate. (4) When they refrain from paying the zakat tax, rain will no longer be poured on them. (5) When they shorten the measures, they will be deprived of plants and entangled in famine.'

- 45. About the sins that alter the blessings, Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) says,

  'The sins that alter the blessings are namely refraining from appreciating the favors, forging lies against Almighty Allah and His Prophet, rupturing relations with the relatives, delaying performing the prayers, pandering (i.e. a go-between in illicit lustful affairs), refraining from coming to the aid of the distressed ones who ask for aid, and refraining from helping the oppressed regain their dues.'

- 46. Sins that deter supplications from being responded are generally every evildoing and namely devouring the orphans' properties illegally, refraining from trusting in Almighty Allah, and arrogance in addition to all vices and indecencies
- 47. Sins that cut off hopes are despair of Almighty Allah's soothing mercy, putting one's confidence in any other one rather Almighty Allah, and giving the lie to the promises of Allah. According to a tradition, these acts cut off the connection between a servant and his Lord and cast in bottomless mazes of deviation.
- 48. According to traditions, sins that draw down tribulations are seven in number. They are:
  setting partners with Almighty Allah in His Godhead, slaying the souls that Allah has
  forbidden to be slain, accusing falsely the married women of adultery, swallowing the properties of the orphans illegally, committing adultery, fleeing from battlefields, and larceny.
- 49. Sayyid Ibn Tawus, Iqbal Al-A'mal, pp. 220-4.
- 50. Terminologically known as masmasah, rinsing out the mouth with a handful of water is a recommended introductory act to the ritual ablution. It is meant to cleansing the teeth and making the mouth free of dirt.
- 51. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 1:292.
- 52. Known as istinshaq in the terminology of Muslim jurisprudence, inhaling water from the nose is another recommended introductory act to the ritual ablution. It cleans the nose and brings about many healthy advantages.
- 53. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 1:282.
- 54. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 1:282.
- 55. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 1:282.
- 56. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 1:283.
- 57. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 1:283.
- 58. Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 1:283.
- 59. Takbirat Al-ihram statement is to say, 'allahu-akbar (Allah is the Most Great)' in order to enter into a prayer. It is thus the introductory statement to prayers.

- 60. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 143.
- 61. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Amali, pp. 255.
- 62. Al-kimyari, Qurb Al-Isnad, pp. 1.
- 63. Ali ibn Babawayh, Fiqh Al-Ridha, pp. 141.
- 64. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 170.
- 65. In the second unit of each prayer, be it obligatory or supererogatory, it is highly recommended to raise the both hands towards the sky and utter any supplicatory statement. This act is known as Qunut although the word linguistically means obeisance and piety.
- 66. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 74.
- 67. The Imam (‘a) used to repeat each of these two statements ten times.
- 68. Ibrahim Al-Kaf’ami, Al-Balad Al-Amin, pp. 494-5.
- 69. Shaykh Ibrahim Al-Kaf’ami, Al-Balad Al-Amin, pp. 38-46
- 70. Sayyid Ibn Tawus, Falah Al-Sa'il, pp. 172-3.
- 71. Sayyid Ibn Tawus, Falah Al-Sa'il, pp. 202.
- 72. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq’at Siffin, pp. 134.
- 73. Sayyid Ibn Tawus, Falah Al-Sa'il, pp. 237-8.
- 74. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq’at Siffin, pp. 134.
- 75. Sayyid Ibn Tawus, Falah Al-Sa'il, pp. 249-50.
- 76. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 91:119.
- 77. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 162-4.
- 78. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 164-6.
- 79. Muhammad Baqir Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa’adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah, pp. 42.
- 80. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 148-52.
- 81. Al Tabrisi, Makarim ul Akhlaq,ppp.329
- 82. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 46-51, as quoted from Muhammad ibn Al-Mashhadi’s Al-Mazar.

- 83. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 184.
- 84. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 184.
- 85. Sayyid Ibn Tawus, Jamal Al-Usbu’, pp. 229-30.
- 86. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 91:243.
- 87. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 198.
- 88. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 199.
- 89. Sayyid Ibn Tawus, Falah Al-Sa'il, pp. 222.
- 90. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 196, as quoted from Shaykh Al-Tabrisi’s Kunuz Al-Najah.
- 91. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 226.
- 92. Sayyid Ibn Tawus, Misbah Al-Za'ir, pp. 88-90.
- 93. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 91:71.
- 94. Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khisal, pp. 45.
- 95. Mirza Al-Nuri, Mustadrak Al-Wasa'il 1:438.
- 96. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 115.
- 97. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 143.
- 98. Ibn Tawus, Muhaj Al-Da’awat, pp. 126.
- 99. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 20:292.
- 100. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 117.
- 101. Sayyid Ibn Tawus, Muhaj Al-Da’awat, pp. 98. It is reported that Imam Ali (‘a) said this supplication during the Battle of Siffin at the night of the most violent encounter; known as laylat Al-harir.
- 102. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 222.
- 103. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 222.
- 104. Sayyid Ibn Tawus, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 102-6.
- 105. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 172-4, as quoted from Shaykh Al-Tabrisi,s ‘Uddat Al-Safar was ‘Umdat Al-Hasar.
- 106. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 233-6.
- 107. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 161-2.

- 108. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 162-9.
- 109. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 450-5.
- 110. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 455-9.
- 111. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 464-8.
- 112. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 468-72.
- 113. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 472-8.
- 114. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 2:119.
- 115. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 9:306.
- 116. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib2:112.
- 117. Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib2:112.
- 118. Al-kimyari, Qurb Al-Isnad, pp. 8; ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 33:382.
- 119. Shaykh Al-Tusi, Tahdhib Al-Ahkam 3:81.
- 120. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 31.
- 121. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 212.
- 122. Al-Mas’udi, Muruj Al-Dhahab 2:370.
- 123. Muhammad Baqir Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa’adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:294.
- 124. Al-Waqidi, Kitab Al-Jamal, pp. 182.
- 125. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 33:452.
- 126. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 46.
- 127. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Kitab Siffin, pp. 231.
- 128. Mirza Al-Nuri, Mustadrak Al-Wasa'il 11:111-2.
- 129. ‘Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 91:242.
- 130. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq’at Siffin, pp. 477.
- 131. Abu-Na’im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 1:70.
- 132. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 282.
- 133. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 282.
- 134. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 286.
- 135. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 253-4.
- 136. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 254.
- 137. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 251.
- 138. Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 2:577.
- 139. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 283.
- 140. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 283.
- 141. Al-Samahiji, Al-Sahifah Al-’Alawiyyah, pp. 281.

- 142. Al-Nuri Al-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-'Alawiyyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 139.
- 143. Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq'at Siffin, pp. 531.
- 144. Al-Daylami, Irshad Al-Qulub, pp. 36.
- 145. Al-Daylami, Irshad Al-Qulub, pp. 26.
- 146. Al-Zarandi, Nusum Durar Al-Simtayn, pp. 151.
- 147. Muhammad Baqir Al-Mahmudi, Nahj Al-Sa'adah fi Mustadrak Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:249.
- 148. Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 215.
- 149. 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 92:3.
- 150. Al-Qasi Al-Maghribi, Da'a'im Al-Islam 2:354.

Appendix: The Holy Shrine of Imam 'Ali

The History Of Constructing The Holy Shrine

Excepting the Holy Imams and a few other persons, no one knew about the location of the grave of Imam Ali ('a) for long ages. There was no way of people knowing about it, because the grave was located in a remote place on a desolate hillock. There was neither any sign of the grave nor the tombstone. Its location came to be known by people when the 'Abbasid ruler, Harun, on assuming power in AH 170 traveled in the environs of Al-Kufah. The purpose was to hunt the wildlife in the wilderness.

When he saw some deer, he started the chase with his hunting dogs and he was then surprised to see that the deer had climbed up a hillock and the dogs were scared of going near them. Harun called a person from Al-kirah and asked him, 'What is this place?' The man answered that the spot was the final resting place of Imam Ali ('a). Harun gave a gift to the person, visited the grave, and ordered the mausoleum to be built. Therefore, a dome was

constructed. People started visiting it and burying their dead in its neighborhood.1

This building was in the shape of a red dome. It had doors on all the four sides. The walls around the grave were made of white bricks.

Muhammad ibn Zayd Al-kassani, the Emir of Tabristan, during the reign of Al-Mu'tasid billah the 'Abbasid ruler, constructed the four outer walls for the dome and made the shrine in the form of a fortress. There were seventy recesses (taq) in the walls. That was in the period between AH 279 and 289.

When 'Asud Al-Dawlah Fanakhusrow ibn Rukn Al-Dawlah came to power in AH 367, he constructed the shrine at a huge expense. The walls were clad with teakwood and the dome was done in white stone. Husayn ibn Al-Hajjaj Al-Baghdadi, died in AH 391, in his poetic appraisal of the monument has said:

O resident of the white dome of the land of Najaf! One who visits the grave will recover from ailment!

At the time of this construction, 'Asud Al-Dawlah had made a will that he should be buried near the shrine in Najaf. Confirming this fact, Ibn Khillakan, a famous Arab historicist, states that 'Asud Al-Dawlah had constructed the shrine at great expense and willed that he too should be buried there.2

Therefore, when he died on the eighth of Shawwal, AH 372, he was buried in the western side of the shrine.

In AH 755, there was a big fire in the complex and most of the structure was destroyed, but in AH 760, it was reconstructed.

In AH 914, Shah Isma'il the Safavid (died in AH 930) built a steel sarcophagus and installed golden lamps inside the shrine.

In AH 1032, Shah 'Abbas Kabir (died in AH 1038) constructed the shrine and extended the courtyard.

In AH 1047, Shah Safi the Safavid (died in AH 1052) started construction at the shrine and his son, Shah ‘Abbas II, completed it in AH 1077 .

In AH 1154 or 1156, Nadir Shah, after the conquest of India, repaired the shrine with glazed tiles and clad the dome and the minarets with gold.

In AH 1207, Muhammad Khan the Qajar and in AH 1232, Fath Ali Shah the Qajar and in AH 1288, Nasir Al-Din Shah the Qajar renovated and beautified the shrine.

In AH 1361, Mulla tahir Sayfuddin, the chief of Jamaat Bawaheer, installed a magnificent sarcophagus made of gold and silver.

In the middle of the 14th century of Hegira, an Iranian businessman installed golden doors for the shrine.3

Merits Of Visiting The Holy Shrine Of Imam ‘Ali´

Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said

Almighty Allah has not created a category of creatures bigger in number than angels. Verily, seventy thousand angels descend every day to circumambulate the Much-Frequented Fane. Then, they circumambulate the Holy Ka’bah. Then, they visit the tomb of the Holy Prophet (S) to greet him. Then, they visit the tomb of Imam Ali Amir Al-Mu'minin (‘a) to greet him. Then, they visit the tomb of Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) to greet him.

They then ascend back to the skies. Every day and up to the Resurrection Day, such a number of angels descend and do the same thing. Verily, if one visits the tomb of Imam Ali (‘a) with full recognition of his right 4 *and being neither arrogant nor conceited, Almighty Allah shall decide for him the reward of one hundred thousand martyrs, forgive his past*

and coming sins, include him with the secured group (on the Resurrection Day), and make easy for him the calling to account; and he will be received be the angels. As he returns home (after pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Imam Ali), these angels will visit him when he is ill. When he dies, these angels will follow him to his grave, imploring Almighty Allah's forgiveness for him.

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) is also reported to have said,

As for one who visits the tomb of Imam Ali ('a) walking, Almighty Allah shall verily decide for him the reward of one ritual pilgrimage (Hajj) and one ritual minor pilgrimage ('umrah). If he returns walking, Almighty Allah shall decide for him the reward of two major pilgrimages and two minor pilgrimages.

He ('a) is also reported to have said,

As for anyone who visits the tomb of my grandfather with recognition of his right, Almighty Allah shall decide for him the reward of acceptable major pilgrimage and admissible minor pilgrimage. I swear by Allah that He shall never give to Hellfire a foot that was dusted in the course of visiting Imam Ali ('a), being walking or riding.

Formulas To Be Said At The Holy Shrine

Upon visiting the holy shrine of Imam Ali ('a), it is highly recommended to practice some special etiquette and to say certain formulas of Ziyarah[5] to be hereinafter mentioned.

First Ziyarah

It is highly recommended to follow the following instructions and practice the following etiquettes at visiting the holy shrine of Imam Ali ('a).[6]

As you are determined to visit the tomb of Imam Ali (‘a), you should bathe yourself, put on two clean pieces of dress, and use a perfume, even though it is acceptable without it. While you are about to leave your house, you may say the following:

اللّٰهُمَّ اِنّي خَرَجْتُ [تَوَجَّهْتُ] مِنْ مَنْزِلِي اَبْغِي فَضْلَكَ وَ اَزُورُ وَصِيَّ نَبِيِّكَ صَلَوَاتُكَ عَلَيْهِمَا اللّٰهُمَّ فَيَسِّرْ ذَلِكَ لِي وَ سَبِّبِ الْمَزَارَ لَهُ وَ اخْلُفْنِي فِي عَاقِبَتِي وَ حُزَانَتِي بِاَحْسَنِ الْخِلافَةِ يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

O Allah, I leave my house seeking Your bounties and visiting the Viceroy of Your Prophet peace of You be upon both of them. So, O Allah, (please do) make it easy for me, help me pay this visit to him, and take my place, while I am away, in my affairs and possessions in the best manner of taking place. O most Merciful of all those who show mercy!

You may then proceed, extolling Almighty Allah with the following doxology:

الحمد لله و سبحان الله و لا اله الاّ الله

All praise be to Allah. All glory be to Allah. There is no god but Allah.

Once you reach the trench of al-Kufah, you may stop there and say the following words:

اللهُ اَكْبَرُ اللهُ اَكْبَرُ اَهْلُ [اَهْلَ] الْكِبْرِيَاءِ وَ الْمَجْدِ وَ الْعَظَمَةِ اللهُ اَكْبَرُ اَهْلُ [اَهْلَ] التَّكْبِيرِ وَ التَّقْدِيسِ وَ التَّسْبِيحِ وَ الْآلاءِ اللهُ اَكْبَرُ مِمَّا اَخَافُ وَ اَحْذَرُ اللهُ اَكْبَرُ عِمَادِي وَ عَلَيْهِ اَتَوَكَّلُ اللهُ اَكْبَرُ رَجَائِي وَ اِلَيْهِ اُنِيبُ اللّٰهُمَّ اَنْتَ وَلِيُّ نِعْمَتِي وَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَى طَلِبَتِي تَعْلَمُ حَاجَتِي وَ مَا تُضْمِرُهُ هَوَاجِسُ الصُّدُورِ وَ خَوَاطِرُ النُّفُوسِ فَاَسْاَلُكَ بِمُحَمَّدٍ الْمُصْطَفَى الَّذِي قَطَعْتَ بِهِ حُجَجَ الْمُحْتَجِّينَ وَ عُذْرَ الْمُعْتَذِرِينَ وَ جَعَلْتَهُ رَحْمَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ اَنْ لا تَحْرِمَنِي ثَوَابَ زِيَارَةِ وَلِيِّكَ وَ اَخِي نَبِيِّكَ اَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ قَصْدَهُ وَ تَجْعَلَنِي مِنْ وَفْدِهِ الصَّالِحِينَ وَ شِيعَتِهِ الْمُتَّقِينَ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

Allah is the Most Great. Allah is the Most Great. O worthiest of exaltation, glorification, and grandeur. Allah is the Most Great. O

worthiest of being deemed Great, of sanctification, of glorification, and of granting bounties. Allah is Greater than what I fear and what I worry about. Allah is the Most Great; He is my support and on Him do I rely. Allah is the Most Great; He is my hope and to Him do I turn. O Allah, You are indeed the source of my blessings and You alone can respond to my request.

You know my neediness and whatever is concealed by the premonitions of hearts and the thoughts of inner selves. I therefore beseech You in the name of Muhammad, the Chosen Prophet, through whom You have stopped all the claims of those who may excuse and the pretexts of a those who may make apologies and whom You have decided to be mercy to the peoples, (I beseech You) not to deprive me of the rewards of my visiting Your intimate servant, the brother of Your Prophet, and the Commander of the Believers and my directing to him, and to include me with the virtuous delegation to him and with his pious adherents; (I beseech for that) in the name of Your mercy, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy.

Once your eyes fall on the holy dome, say these words:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى مَا اخْتَصَّنِي بِهِ مِنْ طِيبِ الْمَوْلِدِ وَ اسْتَخْلَصَنِي اِكْرَاما بِهِ مِنْ مُوَالاةِ الْاَبْرَارِ السَّفَرَةِ الْاَطْهَارِ وَ الْخِيَرَةِ الْاَعْلامِ اللّٰهُمَّ فَتَقَبَّلْ سَعْيِي اِلَيْكَ وَ تَضَرُّعِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْكَ وَ اغْفِرْ لِيَ الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي لا تَخْفَى عَلَيْكَ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ اللهُ الْمَلِكُ الْغَفَّارُ

All praise be to Allah, for He has conferred upon me exclusively the legitimacy of birth, and for He has bestowed me, out of His honoring me, with the loyalty to the pious, immaculate representatives (of Him), the best of all, and the most knowledgeable. O Allah, (please do) accept my seeking for You and my earnest imploration in Your Presence and (please do) forgive my sins that cannot be hidden from You. Verily, You are Allah, the King, the All-forgiving.

When you reach at the fortress of Najaf (*Hisn al-Najaf*), you may say the following words:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَ مَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْ لا اَنْ هَدَانَا اللهُ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي سَيَّرَنِي فِي بِلادِهِ وَ حَمَلَنِي عَلَى دَوَابِّهِ وَ طَوَى لِيَ الْبَعِيدَ وَ صَرَفَ عَنِّي الْمَحْذُورَ وَ دَفَعَ عَنِّي الْمَكْرُوهَ حَتَّى اَقْدَمَنِي حَرَمَ اَخِي رَسُولِهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ

All praise be to Allah Who has guided us to this; and we would not have found the way had it not been that Allah had guided us. All praise be to Allah Who has made me travel in His countries, Who has caused me to ride His animals, Who has made the distant space seem near for me, Who has kept away from me what is dangerous, and Who has held off against me what is unwanted until He made me come up to the Precinct of the brother of His Messenger, peace be upon him and his Household.

You may then enter the city, saying:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي اَدْخَلَنِي هَذِهِ الْبُقْعَةَ الْمُبَارَكَةَ الَّتِي بَارَكَ اللهُ فِيهَا وَ اخْتَارَهَا لِوَصِيِّ نَبِيِّهِ اللّٰهُمَّ فَاجْعَلْهَا شَاهِدَةً لِي

All praise be to Allah Who has allowed me to enter this blessed zone, which Allah has blessed and has chosen for His Prophet's Successor. O Allah, (please do) make this zone witness for me.

When you reach at the first doorstep, you may say the following:

اللّٰهُمَّ بِبَابِكَ وَقَفْتُ وَ بِفِنَائِكَ نَزَلْتُ وَ بِحَبْلِكَ اعْتَصَمْتُ وَ لِرَحْمَتِكَ تَعَرَّضْتُ وَ بِوَلِيِّكَ صَلَوَاتُكَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَسَّلْتُ فَاجْعَلْهَا زِيَارَةً مَقْبُولَةً وَ دُعَاءً مُسْتَجَابا

O Allah, I have stopped at Your door, I have come to Your court, to Your Cord do I cling, Your mercy do I seek, and by Your Intimate Servant may Your blessings be upon him do I beg You. So, (please do) make it an admissible visit and a responded supplication.

You may then stop at the gate of the courtyard, saying the following:

اللّهُمَّ اِنَّ هَذَا الْحَرَمَ حَرَمُكَ وَ الْمَقَامَ مَقَامُكَ وَ اَنَا اَدْخُلُ اِلَيْهِ اُنَاجِيكَ بِمَا اَنْتَ اَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنّي وَ مِنْ سِرّي وَ نَجْوَايَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْحَنَّانِ الْمَنَّانِ الْمُتَطَوِّلِ الَّذِي مِنْ تَطَوُّلِهِ سَهَّلَ لِي زِيَارَةَ مَوْلايَ بِاِحْسَانِهِ وَ لَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي عَنْ زِيَارَتِهِ مَمْنُوعا وَ لا عَنْ وِلايَتِهِ مَدْفُوعا بَلْ تَطَوَّلَ وَ مَنَحَ اللّهُمَّ كَمَا مَنَنْتَ عَلَيَّ بِمَعْرِفَتِهِ فَاجْعَلْنِي مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ وَ اَدْخِلْنِي الْجَنَّةَ بِشَفَاعَتِهِ يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ .

O Allah, this holy place is verily Yours, this situation is Yours, and I am entering here so as to confide to You things that You are more knowledgeable than I am as well as You are more knowledgeable than I am as regards my secrets and my confidential speech. All praise be to Allah, the All-benevolent, the All- favorer, the All-munificent, Who, out of His munificence, has made it easy for me to visit my master, Who has not made me banned from visiting him, and Who has not included me with those who are prevented from being loyal to his (Divinely commissioned) leadership; rather, He has bestowed upon me and donated me (this favor). O Allah, just as You have conferred upon me with the favor of recognition of him, so also (please do) include me with his adherents (Shi'ah) and allow me to enter Paradise by means of his intercession, O most merciful of all those who show mercy.

You may then enter the courtyard of the holy shrine and say the following words:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي اَكْرَمَنِي بِمَعْرِفَتِهِ وَ مَعْرِفَةِ رَسُولِهِ وَ مَنْ فَرَضَ عَلَيَّ طَاعَتَهُ رَحْمَةً مِنْهُ لِي وَ تَطَوُّلا مِنْهُ عَلَيَّ وَ مَنَّ عَلَيَّ بِالْاِيمَانِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي اَدْخَلَنِي حَرَمَ اَخِي رَسُولِهِ وَ اَرَانِيهِ فِي عَافِيَةٍ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَنِي مِنْ زُوَّارِ قَبْرِ وَصِيّ رَسُولِهِ اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لا اِلَهَ اِلا اللّهُ وَحْدَهُ لا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدا عَبْدُهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ جَاءَ بِالْحَقّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّهِ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ عَلِيّا عَبْدُ اللّهِ وَ اَخُو رَسُولِ اللّهِ اللّهُ اَكْبَرُ اللّهُ اَكْبَرُ اللّهُ اَكْبَرُ لا اِلَهَ اِلا اللّهُ وَ اللّهُ اَكْبَرُ وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى هِدَايَتِهِ وَ تَوْفِيقِهِ لِمَا دَعَا اِلَيْهِ مِنْ سَبِيلِهِ اللّهُمَّ اِنَّكَ اَفْضَلُ مَقْصُودٍ وَ اَكْرَمُ مَأْتِيٍّ وَ قَدْ اَتَيْتُكَ مُتَقَرِّبا اِلَيْكَ بِنَبِيِّكَ نَبِيّ الرَّحْمَةِ وَ بِاَخِيهِ اَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيّ بْنِ اَبِي طَالِبٍ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلامُ فَصَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ لا تُخَيِّبْ سَعْيِي وَ انْظُرْ اِلَيَّ نَظْرَةً رَحِيمَةً تَنْعَشُنِي بِهَا وَ اجْعَلْنِي عِنْدَكَ وَجِيها فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ وَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ.

All praise be to Allah Who has honored me with the recognition of Him, the recognition of His Messenger, and the recognition of him the obedience to whom has been made incumbent upon me by Him on account of His mercy to me, His favor that He bestowed upon me, and His conferral upon me with faith. All praise be to Allah Who has allowed me to enter the shrine of His Messenger's brother and has made me see this shrine while I enjoy good health. All praise be to Allah Who has included me with the visitors of the tomb of His Messenger's successor. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, alone without having any associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. He has conveyed the truth from Allah. And I bear witness that Ali is the servant of Allah and the brother of Allah's Messenger. Allah is the Most Great. Allah is the Most Great. Allah is the Most Great. There is no god but Allah, and Allah is the Most Great. All praise be to Allah for He has guided me and led me successfully to His course to which He has invited (us). O Allah, You are verily the most excellent besought One and the most honorable purposed One. I thus have come to You, seeking nearness to You in the name of Your Prophet, the Prophet of Mercy and in the name of his brother, the Commander of the Faithful, Ali the son of Abu Talib peace be upon them both. So, (please do) send blessings upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, do not disappoint my efforts, (please) grant me a merciful look from You through which You refresh me, make me illustrious in Your view in this world as well as the world to come, and make me of those brought near to You.

You may then walk until you stop at the door of the portico and say the following words:

السَّلامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللهِ اَمِينِ اللهِ عَلَى وَحْيِهِ وَ عَزَائِمِ اَمْرِهِ الْخَاتِمِ لِمَا سَبَقَ وَ الْفَاتِحِ لِمَا اسْتُقْبِلَ وَ الْمُهَيْمِنِ عَلَى ذَلِكَ كُلِّهِ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ السَّلامُ عَلَى صَاحِبِ السَّكِينَةِ السَّلامُ عَلَى الْمَدْفُونِ بِالْمَدِينَةِ السَّلامُ عَلَى الْمَنْصُورِ الْمُؤَيَّدِ السَّلامُ عَلَى اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللهِ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ.

Peace be upon Allah's Messenger whom Allah has entrusted with His Revelations and with His determined commandments, who sealed the previous Messages, paved the way to the coming blessings, and who prevails over all that. May the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, too. Peace be upon the holder of tranquility. peace be upon the one buried at Al-Madinah. Peace be upon the triumphed and supported (by Allah). Peace be upon Abu'l-Qasim, Muhammad the son of Abdullah. May the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, too.

You may then enter the portico with your right foot, stop at the door of the dome, and say these words:

اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لا اِلَهَ اِلا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لا شَريكَ لَهُ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدا عَبْدُهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ جَاءَ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ وَ صَدَّقَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حَبِيبَ اللهِ وَ خِيَرَتَهُ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ السَّلامُ عَلَى اَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَبْدِ اللهِ وَ اَخِي رَسُولِ اللهِ يَا مَوْلايَ يَا اَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَبْدُكَ وَ ابْنُ عَبْدِكَ وَ ابْنُ اَمَتِكَ جَاءَكَ مُسْتَجِيرا بِذِمَّتِكَ قَاصِدا اِلَى حَرَمِكَ مُتَوَجِّها اِلَى مَقَامِكَ مُتَوَسِّلا اِلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى بِكَ اَ اَدْخُلُ يَا مَوْلايَ اَ اَدْخُلُ يَا اَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اَ اَدْخُلُ يَا حُجَّةَ اللهِ اَ اَدْخُلُ يَا اَمِينَ اللهِ اَ اَدْخُلُ يَا مَلائِكَةَ اللهِ الْمُقِيمِينَ [الْمُقَرَّبِينَ] فِي هَذَا الْمَشْهَدِ يَا مَوْلايَ اَ تَأْذَنُ لِي بِالدُّخُولِ اَفْضَلَ مَا اَذِنْتَ لِاَحَدٍ مِنْ اَوْلِيَائِكَ فَاِنْ لَمْ اَكُنْ لَهُ اَهْلا فَاَنْتَ اَهْلٌ لِذَلِكَ.

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, alone without having any associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. He has conveyed the truth from Him and verified the (past) Messengers. Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah! Peace be upon you, O most-beloved of Allah and best of His beings! Peace be upon the Commander of the Faithful: the servant of Allah and the brother of Allah's Messenger. O master, O Commander of the Faithful! I, your slave and the son of your slave and your bondmaid, have come to you seeking the refuge of your protection, directing to your shrine, turning my face toward your place, and begging Almighty Allah in your name. May I enter, O master? May I enter, O Commander of the Faithful? May I enter, O argument of Allah? May I enter, O trustee of Allah? May I enter, O angels of Allah who reside in this shrine? O master, may you

permit me to enter in the best way of permission you have ever given to any of your devotees? If I am too little to deserve your permission, then You are too exalted to deprive me of it.

You may then kiss the doorstep and enter there with your right foot, saying the following:

بِسْمِ اللهِ وَ بِاللهِ وَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ وَ عَلَى مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَ ارْحَمْنِي وَ تُبْ عَلَيَّ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

In the Name of Allah (I begin), in Allah (I trust), on the way of Allah, and on the norm of the Messenger of Allah (I proceed), may Allah bless him and his Household. O Allah, (please do) forgive me for You are verily the Oft-Returning.

You may then walk until you face and become opposite to the holy tomb. You may stop there before reaching the tomb, and say the following:

السَّلامُ مِنَ اللهِ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِ اللهِ اَمِينِ اللهِ عَلَى وَحْيِهِ وَ رِسَالاتِهِ وَ عَزَائِمِ اَمْرِهِ وَ مَعْدِنِ الْوَحْيِ وَ التَّنْزِيلِ الْخَاتِمِ لِمَا سَبَقَ وَ الْفَاتِحِ لِمَا اسْتُقْبِلَ وَ الْمُهَيْمِنِ عَلَى ذَلِكَ كُلِّهِ الشَّاهِدِ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ السِّرَاجِ الْمُنِيرِ وَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْهِ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ اَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ الْمَظْلُومِينَ اَفْضَلَ وَ اَكْمَلَ وَ اَرْفَعَ وَ اَشْرَفَ مَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى اَحَدٍ مِنْ اَنْبِيَائِكَ وَ رُسُلِكَ وَ اَصْفِيَائِكَ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى اَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَبْدِكَ وَ خَيْرِ خَلْقِكَ بَعْدَ نَبِيِّكَ وَ اَخِي رَسُولِكَ وَ وَصِيِّ حَبِيبِكَ الَّذِي انْتَجَبْتَهُ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ وَ الدَّلِيلِ عَلَى مَنْ بَعَثْتَهُ بِرِسَالاتِكَ وَ دَيَّانِ الدِّينِ بِعَدْلِكَ وَ فَصْلِ قَضَائِكَ بَيْنَ خَلْقِكَ وَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْهِ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ. اَللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى الْاَئِمَّةِ مِنْ وُلْدِهِ الْقَوَّامِينَ بِاَمْرِكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ الَّذِينَ ارْتَضَيْتَهُمْ اَنْصَارا لِدِينِكَ وَ حَفَظَةً لِسِرِّكَ وَ شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى خَلْقِكَ وَ اَعْلاما لِعِبَادِكَ صَلَوَاتُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ اَجْمَعِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَى اَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيِّ بْنِ اَبِي طَالِبٍ وَصِيِّ رَسُولِ اللهِ وَ خَلِيفَتِهِ وَ الْقَائِمِ بِاَمْرِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَيِّدِ الْوَصِيِّينَ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ السَّلامُ عَلَى فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتِ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ سَيِّدَةِ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَى الْحَسَنِ وَ الْحُسَيْنِ سَيِّدَيْ شَبَابِ اَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ مِنَ الْخَلْقِ اَجْمَعِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَى الْاَئِمَّةِ الرَّاشِدِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَى الْاَنْبِيَاءِ وَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَى الْاَئِمَّةِ الْمُسْتَوْدَعِينَ، السَّلامُ عَلَى خَاصَّةِ اللهِ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ السَّلامُ عَلَى الْمُتَوَسِّمِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

الّذِينَ قَامُوا بِاَمْرِهِ وَ وَازَرُوا اَوْلِيَاءَ اللهِ وَ خَافُوا بِخَوْفِهِمْ السَّلامُ عَلَى الْمَلائِكَةِ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْنَا وَ عَلَى عِبَادِ اللهِ الصَّالِحِينَ.

Peace of Allah be upon Muhammad the Messenger of Allah, the trustee of Allah over His Revelations, Messages, and determined commandments, the core of the Divine Inspiration and Revelation, who sealed the previous Messages, paved the way to the coming blessings, who prevails over all that, the witness over the creatures, and the luminous torch. Peace and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon him. O Allah, (please do) send blessings upon Muhammad and his Household, the oppressed ones, with the best, most perfect, most exalted, and most honored blessings that You have ever showed on any of Your Prophets, Messengers, and Chosen servants. O Allah, (please do) send blessings upon the Commander of the Faithful, Your servant, the best of Your creatures after Your Prophet, the s brother of Your Messenger, the Successor of Your most-beloved one, whom You have selected from among Your beings, the guide to those whom You sent with Your messages, the establisher of the true religion by means of Your justice, and the decisive judge among Your beings. Peace and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon him.

O Allah, (please do) send blessings upon the Imams from his offspring, (who are) the holders of Your commandments after him, and the immaculate ones whom You have accepted as supporters of Your religion, keepers of Your secret, witnesses over Your created beings, and signs (of example) for Your servants. May Your blessings be upon them all. Peace be upon the Commander of the Faithful, Ali the son of Abu Talib, the successor of Allah's Messenger, his representative, who managed his affairs after him, and the master of all Prophet's successors. May Allah's mercy and blessings be upon him, too. Peace be upon Fatimah , the daughter of Allah's Messenger, may Allah's blessings be upon her, (she is) the doyenne of all the women of this world. Peace be upon Al- Hasan and Al-Husayn, the chiefs of the youth of Paradise among all beings. Peace be upon the Guiding Imams. Peace be upon the Prophets and the Messengers. Peace be upon the Imams whom

are entrusted (with the religion by Allah). Peace be upon the elite creatures of Allah. Peace be upon those who understand by tokens. Peace be upon the faithful believers who have carried out His orders, supported the saints of Allah, and have feared for their fear. Peace be upon the Favorite Angels. Peace be upon us and upon the righteous servants of Allah.

You may then draw near the tomb, face it, make the kiblah direction behind you, and say the following words:

اَلسَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حَبِيبَ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا صَفْوَةَ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَلِيَّ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حُجَّةَ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اِمَامَ الْهُدَى السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا عَلَمَ التُّقَى السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا الْوَصِيُّ الْبَرُّ التَّقِيُّ النَّقِيُّ الْوَفِيُّ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اَبَا الْحَسَنِ وَ الْحُسَيْنِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا عَمُودَ الدِّينِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا سَيِّدَ الْوَصِيِّينَ وَ اَمِينَ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَ دَيَّانَ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ وَ خَيْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ سَيِّدَ الصِّدِّيقِينَ وَ الصَّفْوَةَ مِنْ سُلالَةِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَ بَابَ حِكْمَةِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَ خَازِنَ وَحْيِهِ وَ عَيْبَةَ عِلْمِهِ، وَ النَّاصِحَ لِأُمَّةِ نَبِيِّهِ وَ التَّالِيَ لِرَسُولِهِ وَ الْمُوَاسِيَ لَهُ بِنَفْسِهِ وَ النَّاطِقَ بِحُجَّتِهِ وَ الدَّاعِيَ اِلَى شَرِيعَتِهِ وَ الْمَاضِيَ عَلَى سُنَّتِهِ اللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّي اَشْهَدُ اَنَّهُ قَدْ بَلَّغَ عَنْ رَسُولِكَ مَا حُمِّلَ وَ رَعَى مَا اسْتُحْفِظَ وَ حَفِظَ مَا اسْتُوْدِعَ وَ حَلَّلَ حَلالَكَ وَ حَرَّمَ حَرَامَكَ وَ اَقَامَ اَحْكَامَكَ وَ جَاهَدَ النَّاكِثِينَ فِي سَبِيلِكَ وَ الْقَاسِطِينَ فِي حُكْمِكَ وَ الْمَارِقِينَ عَنْ اَمْرِكَ صَابِرا مُحْتَسِبا لا تَأْخُذُهُ فِيكَ لَوْمَةُ لائِمٍ اللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَيْهِ اَفْضَلَ مَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى اَحَدٍ مِنْ اَوْلِيَائِكَ وَ اَصْفِيَائِكَ وَ اَوْصِيَاءِ اَنْبِيَائِكَ اللّٰهُمَّ هَذَا قَبْرُ وَلِيِّكَ الَّذِي فَرَضْتَ طَاعَتَهُ وَ جَعَلْتَ فِي اَعْنَاقِ عِبَادِكَ مُبَايَعَتَهُ وَ خَلِيفَتِكَ الَّذِي بِهِ تَأْخُذُ وَ تُعْطِي وَ بِهِ تُثِيبُ وَ تُعَاقِبُ وَ قَدْ قَصَدْتُهُ طَمَعا لِمَا اَعْدَدْتَهُ لِاَوْلِيَائِكَ فَبِعَظِيمِ قَدْرِهِ عِنْدَكَ وَ جَلِيلِ خَطَرِهِ لَدَيْكَ وَ قُرْبِ مَنْزِلَتِهِ مِنْكَ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ افْعَلْ بِي مَا اَنْتَ اَهْلُهُ فَاِنَّكَ اَهْلُ الْكَرَمِ وَ الْجُودِ وَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا مَوْلايَ وَ عَلَى ضَجِيعَيْكَ آدَمَ وَ نُوحٍ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ.

Peace be upon you, O Commander of the Faithful. Peace be upon you, O beloved by Allah. Peace be upon you, O choice of Allah. Peace be upon you, O intimate servant of Allah. Peace be upon you, O Argument of Allah (against His creatures). Peace be upon you, O leader of true guidance. Peace be upon you, O sign of piety. Peace be upon you, O successor, religious, pious, pure, and loyal. Peace be upon you, O father of Al-Hasan and Al- Husayn.

Peace be upon you, O pillar of the religion. Peace be upon you, O chief of the successors (of Prophets), trustee of the Lord of the worlds, judge on the Judgment Day, best of the believers, chief of the most truthful ones, elite of the Prophets' lineage, door to the wisdom of the Lord of the worlds, keeper of His Revelation, container of His knowledge, advisor of His Prophet's people, next to His Messenger, who sacrificed himself for him (i.e. for the Messenger), speaker with his arguments, inviter to his principles, and steadfast on his instructions. O Allah, I do bear witness that he carried out the mission conveyed to him by Your Messenger, achieved what he was ordered to keep, kept what has been stored with him, deemed lawful that which You deem lawful, deemed unlawful that which You deem unlawful, put into practice Your laws, strove against the contraveners for Your sake, against the wrongdoers according to Your laws, and against the apostates from Your decree, did all that with steadfastness, expecting Your reward, and no blame of any blamer could ever influence him. O Allah, (please do) send blessings upon him with the best way You have ever blessed any of Your intimate servants, Your choicest ones, and Your Prophet's successors. O Allah, this is the tomb of Your representative the obedience to whom has been made by You incumbent (upon us), the loyalty to whom has been made by You in the necks of Your servants, and (it is the tomb of) Your viceroy through whom You will give and take, and through whom You will reward and punish. I have directed to him, seeking for what You have prepared for Your intimate servants. So, (I beseech You) in the name of his eminent standing with You, in the name of his great status in Your view, and in the name of the closeness of his position to You, to bless Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad and to do to me that which is expected from You, for You are verily worthy of honoring and generous granting. Peace be upon you, O my master, and upon your partners in the place, (Prophet) Adam and (Prophet) Noah. May Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you, too.

You may then kiss the tomb from the head's side and say the following words:

يَا مَوْلايَ اِلَيْكَ وُفُودِي وَ بِكَ اَتَوَسَّلُ اِلَى رَبِّي فِي بُلُوغِ مَقْصُودِي وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ الْمُتَوَسِّلَ بِكَ غَيْرُ خَائِبٍ وَ الطَّالِبَ بِكَ عَنْ مَعْرِفَةٍ غَيْرُ مَرْدُودٍ اِلا بِقَضَاءِ حَوَائِجِهِ فَكُنْ لِي شَفِيعا اِلَى اللهِ رَبِّكَ وَ رَبِّي فِي قَضَاءِ حَوَائِجِي وَ تَيْسِيرِ اُمُورِي وَ كَشْفِ شِدَّتِي وَ غُفْرَانِ ذَنْبِي وَ سَعَةِ رِزْقِي وَ تَطْوِيلِ عُمُرِي وَ اِعْطَاءِ سُؤْلِي فِي آخِرَتِي وَ دُنْيَايَ اللّٰهُمَّ الْعَنْ قَتَلَةَ اَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اللّٰهُمَّ الْعَنْ قَتَلَةَ الْحَسَنِ وَ الْحُسَيْنِ اللّٰهُمَّ الْعَنْ قَتَلَةَ الْاَئِمَّةِ وَ عَذِّبْهُمْ عَذَابا اَلِيما لا تُعَذِّبُهُ اَحَدا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ عَذَابا كَثِيرا لا انْقِطَاعَ لَهُ وَ لا اَجَلَ وَ لا اَمَدَ بِمَا شَاقُّوا وُلاةَ اَمْرِكَ وَ اَعِدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابا لَمْ تُحِلَّهُ بِاَحَدٍ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ. اللّٰهُمَّ وَ اَدْخِلْ عَلَى قَتَلَةِ اَنْصَارِ رَسُولِكَ وَ عَلَى قَتَلَةِ اَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ عَلَى قَتَلَةِ الْحَسَنِ وَ الْحُسَيْنِ وَ عَلَى قَتَلَةِ اَنْصَارِ الْحَسَنِ وَ الْحُسَيْنِ وَ قَتَلَةِ مَنْ قُتِلَ فِي وِلايَةِ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ اَجْمَعِينَ عَذَابا اَلِيما مُضَاعَفا فِي اَسْفَلِ دَرْكٍ مِنَ الْجَحِيمِ لا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَ هُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ مَلْعُونُونَ نَاكِسُوا رُءُوسِهِمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ قَدْ عَايَنُوا النَّدَامَةَ وَ الْخِزْيَ الطَّوِيلَ لِقَتْلِهِمْ عِتْرَةَ اَنْبِيَائِكَ وَ رُسُلِكَ وَ اَتْبَاعَهُمْ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ اللّٰهُمَّ الْعَنْهُمْ فِي مُسْتَسِرِّ السِّرِّ وَ ظَاهِرِ الْعَلانِيَةِ فِي اَرْضِكَ وَ سَمَائِكَ اللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ لِي قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ فِي اَوْلِيَائِكَ وَ حَبِّبْ اِلَيَّ مَشَاهِدَهُمْ وَ مُسْتَقَرَّهُمْ حَتَّى تُلْحِقَنِي بِهِمْ وَ تَجْعَلَنِي لَهُمْ تَبَعا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

O my master, to You is my coming and in your name do I beseech my Lord so that I may achieve my goal. I bear witness that he who beseeches (Allah) in your name shall never be disappointed and he who implores (Allah) in your name, with full cognizance, shall never be rejected; rather, all his needs shall be settled. So, (please) be my interceder to Allah my and your Lord for purpose of settling my needs, making easy my affairs, relieving my depressions, forgiving my sins, expanding my sustenance sources, extending my lifetime, and granting me all my requests for the world to come as well as this world. O Allah, curse the killers of the Commander of the Faithful. O Allah, curse the killers of Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn. O Allah, curse the killers of the Imams, and subject them to such a painful chastisement that You have never subjected any of Your creatures to it, such an enormous chastisement that never ceases, nor comes to an end, nor reaches a deadline, for what they contended against Your authorities. And (please do) prepare for them such an intense torture that You have not de-

cided for any of Your creatures. O Allah, (please do) impose upon the killers of Your Messenger's supporters, the killers of the Commander of the Faithful, the killers of Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, the killers of the supporters of Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, and the killers of all those whom were killed because of their loyalty to the Household of Muhammad, a painful, cyclic punishment in the lowest class of Hellfire that the punishment shall not be lightened for them and they shall lay therein in utter despair and endless curse; they shall be hanging down their heads before their Lord after they shall find out with certainty regret and long-lasting disgrace, for they killed the members of the household of Your Prophets and Messengers and the righteous servants from their followers. O Allah, (do) curse them in the most concealed secrecy and in the most apparent openness, in Your lands and in Your heavens. O Allah, (please do) decide for me a truthful step with Your intimate servants and make me long for their shrines and their residing-places until You include me with them and make me among their followers in this world as well as the world to come. O most Merciful of all those who show mercy!

You may then kiss the tomb, face the tomb of Imam al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ('a), make the kiblah direction seem to be between your shoulders, and say the following words:

السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اَبَا عَبْدِ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابْنَ رَسُولِ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابْنَ اَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابْنَ فَاطِمَةَ الزَّهْرَاءِ سَيِّدَةِ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اَبَا الْاَئِمَّةِ الْهَادِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا صَرِيعَ الدَّمْعَةِ السَّاكِبَةِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا صَاحِبَ الْمُصِيبَةِ الرَّاتِبَةِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ وَ عَلَى جَدِّكَ وَ اَبِيكَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ وَ عَلَى اُمِّكَ وَ اَخِيكَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ وَ عَلَى الْاَئِمَّةِ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِكَ وَ بَنِيكَ اَشْهَدُ لَقَدْ طَيَّبَ اللهُ بِكَ التُّرَابَ وَ اَوْضَحَ بِكَ الْكِتَابَ وَ جَعَلَكَ وَ اَبَاكَ وَ جَدَّكَ وَ اَخَاكَ وَ بَنِيكَ عِبْرَةً لِاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ يَا ابْنَ الْمَيَامِينِ الْاَطْيَابِ التَّالِينَ الْكِتَابَ وَجَّهْتُ سَلامِي اِلَيْكَ صَلَوَاتُ اللهِ وَ سَلامُهُ عَلَيْكَ وَ جَعَلَ اَفْئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي اِلَيْكَ مَا خَابَ مَنْ تَمَسَّكَ بِكَ وَ لَجَاَ اِلَيْكَ.

Peace be upon you, O Abu-'Abdullah. Peace be upon you, O son of Allah's Messenger. Peace be upon you, O son of the Comman-

der of the Faithful. Peace be upon you, O son of Fatimah , the luminous lady, the doyenne of all women of the worlds. Peace be upon you, O father of the Imams the guides and well-guided. Peace be upon you, O victim of the pouring tears. Peace be upon you, O man of the disastrous misfortune. Peace be upon you and upon your grandfather and father. Peace be upon you and upon your mother and brother. Peace be upon you and upon the Imams from your offspring and descendants. I bear witness that Allah has purified the soil (on which you fell down) through you, has made clear His Book through you, and has made you, your father, your grandfather, your brother, and your descendants examples for the owners of intellects. O son of the blessed, purified ones who recite (and apply) the Book utterly, I direct my greetings to you. May Allah make His peace and blessings to be upon you and may He make the hearts of some people yearn toward you. Disappointment shall never chase him who adheres to you and resorts to you.

You may then move to the side of the feet and say the following words:

السَّلامُ عَلَى اَبِي الْاَئِمَّةِ وَ خَلِيلِ النُّبُوَّةِ وَ الْمَخْصُوصِ بِالْاُخُوَّةِ السَّلامُ عَلَى يَعْسُوبِ الدِّينِ وَ الْاِيمَانِ وَ كَلِمَةِ الرَّحْمَنِ السَّلامُ عَلَى مِيزَانِ الْاَعْمَالِ وَ مُقَلِّبِ الْاَحْوَالِ وَ سَيْفِ ذِي الْجَلالِ وَ سَاقِي السَّلْسَبِيلِ الزُّلالِ السَّلامُ عَلَى صَالِحِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ وَارِثِ عِلْمِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَ الْحَاكِمِ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ السَّلامُ عَلَى شَجَرَةِ التَّقْوَى وَ سَامِعِ السِّرِّ وَ النَّجْوَى السَّلامُ عَلَى حُجَّةِ اللهِ الْبَالِغَةِ وَ نِعْمَتِهِ السَّابِغَةِ وَ نَقِمَتِهِ الدَّامِغَةِ السَّلامُ عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ الْوَاضِحِ وَ النَّجْمِ اللائِحِ وَ الْاِمَامِ النَّاصِحِ وَ الزِّنَادِ الْقَادِحِ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ.

Peace be upon the father of the Imams, the intimate friend of Prophethood, and the marked, exclusively, by fraternity(with the Holy Prophet). Peace be upon the head of the religion and faith, and the word of the All-beneficent Lord. Peace be upon the Scale of the deeds the turner over of manners, the sword of the Lord of Majesty, and who supplies with the fresh water of Salsabil. Peace be upon the most righteous of the believers, the inheritor of the

Prophet's knowledge, and the judge on the Judgment Day. Peace be upon the tree of piety and the hearer of hidden and confidential speeches. Peace be upon Allah's conclusive argument, His flowing boon, and His forceful punishment. Peace be upon the clear-cut path, the patent star, the advising leader, and the igniting firelock. May Allah's mercy and blessings be upon him.

You may then say the following:

اللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى اَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيِّ بْنِ اَبِي طَالِبٍ اَخِي نَبِيِّكَ وَ وَلِيِّهِ وَ نَاصِرِهِ وَ وَصِيِّهِ وَ وَزِيرِهِ وَ مُسْتَوْدَعِ عِلْمِهِ وَ مَوْضِعِ سِرِّهِ وَ بَابِ حِكْمَتِهِ وَ النَّاطِقِ بِحُجَّتِهِ وَ الدَّاعِي اِلَى شَرِيعَتِهِ وَ خَلِيفَتِهِ فِي اُمَّتِهِ وَ مُفَرِّجِ الْكَرْبِ عَنْ وَجْهِهِ وَ قَاصِمِ الْكَفَرَةِ وَ مُرْغِمِ الْفَجَرَةِ الَّذِي جَعَلْتَهُ مِنْ نَبِيِّكَ بِمَنْزِلَةِ هَارُونَ مِنْ مُوسَى اللّٰهُمَّ وَالِ مَنْ وَالاهُ وَ عَادِ مَنْ عَادَاهُ وَ انْصُرْ مَنْ نَصَرَهُ وَ اخْذُلْ مَنْ خَذَلَهُ وَ الْعَنْ مَنْ نَصَبَ لَهُ مِنَ الْاَوَّلِينَ وَ الْآخِرِينَ وَ صَلِّ عَلَيْهِ اَفْضَلَ مَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى اَحَدٍ مِنْ اَوْصِيَاءِ اَنْبِيَائِكَ يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ .

O Allah, (please do) send blessings upon the Commander of the Faithful, Ali the son of Abu Talib: the brother, ally, supporter, successor, and patron of Your Prophet, the store of his knowledge, the depot of his secrets, the door to his wisdom, the spokesman with his arguments, the caller to his code of law, his viceroy in his community, the reliever of agony from his face, the terminator of the infidels, the conqueror on the wicked ones, whom You have made, with regard to his position to Your Prophet, to occupy the same position that (Prophet) Aaron enjoyed with (Prophet) Moses. O Allah, (please do) give support to any one who supports him, be the enemy of every one who antagonizes him, give victory to any one who gives him his victory, disappoint every one who disappoints him, and lay curse on any one who incurs the hostility of him from the past and the coming generations. And(please do) bless him with the best blessings that You have ever poured on any of Your Prophet's successors. O Lord of the worlds!

You may then return to your place at the side of the head for visiting Prophet Adam and Prophet Noah, peace be upon them. Visiting Prophet Adam, you may say the following:

السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا صَفِيَّ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حَبِيبَ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اَمِينَ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا خَلِيفَةَ اللهِ فِي اَرْضِهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اَبَا الْبَشَرِ السَّلامُ [سَلامُ اللهِ] عَلَيْكَ وَ عَلَى رُوحِكَ وَ بَدَنِكَ وَ عَلَى الطَّاهِرِينَ مِنْ وُلْدِكَ وَ ذُرِّيَّتِكَ وَ صَلَّى [اللهُ عَلَيْكَ] صَلاةً لا يُحْصِيهَا اِلا هُوَ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ.

Peace be upon you, O choice of Allah. Peace be upon you, O beloved by Allah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet of Allah. Peace be upon you, O trustee of Allah. Peace be upon you, O representative of Allah in His lands. Peace be upon you, O father of all mankind. Peace be upon you and upon your soul and body, and upon the pure ones from your sons and descendants. May Allah pour upon you such innumerable blessings that none can count save Him. May Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you.

Visiting Prophet Noah, you may say the following words:

السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا صَفِيَّ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَلِيَّ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حَبِيبَ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا شَيْخَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اَمِينَ اللهِ فِي اَرْضِهِ صَلَوَاتُ اللهِ وَ سَلامُهُ عَلَيْكَ وَ عَلَى رُوحِكَ وَ بَدَنِكَ وَ عَلَى الطَّاهِرِينَ مِنْ وُلْدِكَ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ .

Peace be upon you, O Prophet of Allah. Peace be upon you, O choice of Allah. Peace be upon you, O intimate servant of Allah. Peace be upon you, O beloved by Allah. Peace be upon you, O chief of the Messengers. Peace be upon you, O trustee of Allah in His lands. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon you, upon your soul and body, and upon the pure ones from among your sons. May Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you.

You may then offer a six unit prayer. In the first two units, which are intended for visiting the tomb of Imam 'Ali Amir al-Mu'minin ('a), you may recite Surah al-Fatihah and Surah al-Rahman (No. 55) at the first unit, and recite Surah al-Fatihah and Surah Yasin (No. 36) in the second. When you say the tashahhud and taslim statements, you may then say the famous Tasbih al-Zahra' litany, implore for Almighty Allah's forgiveness (i.e. istighfar), pray Him

to grant you your personal needs, and then say the following words:

اللّٰهُمَّ اِنّي صَلَّيْتُ هَاتَيْنِ الرَّكْعَتَيْنِ هَدِيَّةً مِنّي اِلَى سَيِّدِي وَ مَوْلايَ وَلِيِّكَ وَ اَخِي رَسُولِكَ اَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ سَيِّدِ الْوَصِيِّينَ عَلِيِّ بْنِ اَبِي طَالِبٍ صَلَوَاتُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلَى آلِهِ اللّٰهُمَّ فَصَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ تَقَبَّلْهَا مِنّي وَ اجْزِنِي عَلَى ذَلِكَ جَزَاءَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ اللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ صَلَّيْتُ وَ لَكَ رَكَعْتُ وَ لَكَ سَجَدْتُ وَحْدَكَ لا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لِاَنَّهُ لا تَكُونُ [لا تَجُوزُ] الصَّلاةُ وَ الرُّكُوعُ وَ السُّجُودُ اِلا لَكَ لِاَنَّكَ اَنْتَ اللهُ لا اِلَهَ اِلا اَنْتَ اللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ تَقَبَّلْ مِنّي زِيَارَتِي وَ اَعْطِنِي سُؤْلِي بِمُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ .

O Allah, I have offered these two units of prayer, as present from me to my master and chief: Your intimate servant, the brother of Your Messenger, the Commander of the Faithful and the chief of the Prophets' successors; namely, Ali the son of Abu Talib, may Allah's blessings be upon him and his household. So, O Allah, (please do) send blessings upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, accept that prayer from me, and confer upon me with the reward that You give to the good-doers. O Allah, to You have I offered prayer, genuflected, and prostrated myself; to You alone without associating anyone with You, because prayers, genuflections, and prostrations are submitted to none save You, because You are Allah; there is no god save You. O Allah, (please do) bless Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, admit my visit, and respond to my requests in the name of Muhammad and his Household the immaculate ones.

You may then provide the other four units as present to Prophet Adam and Prophet Noah.
You may then prostrate yourself for thanksgiving (sajdat al-shukr) and say the following words:

اللّٰهُمَّ اِلَيْكَ تَوَجَّهْتُ وَ بِكَ اعْتَصَمْتُ وَ عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْتُ اللّٰهُمَّ اَنْتَ ثِقَتِي وَ رَجَائِي فَاكْفِنِي مَا اَهَمَّنِي وَ مَا لا يُهِمُّنِي وَ مَا اَنْتَ اَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنّي عَزَّ جَارُكَ وَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَ لا اِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ قَرِّبْ فَرَجَهُمْ

O Allah, to You do I direct my face, to You do I resort, and on You do I rely. O Allah, You are my trust and my hope; so, (please do) save me from whatever concerns me, whatever does not concern me, and whatever You know more than I do. Certainly, protected is he who lies under Your protection, glory be to Your praise, and there is no deity save You. (Please do) send blessings upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, and hasten their Relief.

You may then put your right cheek on the ground and say the following words:

ارْحَمْ ذُلِّي بَيْنَ يَدَيْكَ وَ تَضَرُّعِي اِلَيْكَ وَ وَحْشَتِي مِنَ النَّاسِ وَ اُنْسِي بِكَ يَا كَرِيمُ يَا كَرِيمُ يَا كَرِيمُ

(Please do) have mercy on my humiliation before You, on my earnest imploring to You, on my loneliness among people, and on my amiability with You. O All-generous! O All- generous! O All-generous!

You may then put your left cheek on the ground and say the following words:

لا اِلَهَ اِلا اللهُ اَنْتَ رَبّي حَقّا حَقّا سَجَدْتُ لَكَ يَا رَبِّ تَعَبُّدا وَ رِقّا اللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّ عَمَلِي ضَعِيفٌ فَضَاعِفْهُ لِي يَا كَرِيمُ يَا كَرِيمُ يَا كَرِيمُ .

There is no god save You, my Lord; truly, truly. O Lord, I prostrate myself before You as sign of my worshipfulness and servitude to You. O Allah, my deed is certainly feeble; so, (please do) grant it strength by increasing it many times, O All-generous! O All-generous! O All- generous!

You may then return to the state of ordinary prostration and repeat the following word one hundred times:

شكرا

Thanks!

You are recommended to pray Almighty Allah as earnestly as possible, because the place you are in is the zone of granting requests. You are also recommended to implore Almighty Allah for forgiveness as sincerely as possible, because the place you are in is the zone of forgiveness. You are recommended to beseech Almighty Allah for settling your needs as seriously as possible, because the place you are in is the zone of responding to the needs.

Duas After The Ziyarah Of Imam Ali (A) And After The Recitation Of Nafilah Prayers In Najaf Ashraf

In his book of al-Mazar, Sayyid ibn Tawus says: Whenever you offer an obligatory or a supererogatory prayer during your residence in the holy shrine of Imam ‘Ali Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a), you are recommended to say the following supplication:

اللّٰهُمَّ لا بُدَّ مِنْ اَمْرِكَ وَ لا بُدَّ مِنْ قَدَرِكَ وَ لا بُدَّ مِنْ قَضَائِكَ وَ لا حَوْلَ وَ لا قُوَّةَ اِلا بِكَ اللّٰهُمَّ فَمَا [كَمَا] قَضَيْتَ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ قَضَاءٍ اَوْ قَدَّرْتَ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ قَدَرٍ فَاَعْطِنَا مَعَهُ صَبْرا يَقْهَرُهُ وَ يَدْمَغُهُ وَ اجْعَلْهُ لَنَا صَاعِدا فِي رِضْوَانِكَ يُنْمِي [يُنْمَى] فِي حَسَنَاتِنَا وَ تَفْضِيلِنَا وَ سُؤْدَدِنَا وَ شَرَفِنَا وَ مَجْدِنَا وَ نَعْمَائِنَا وَ كَرَامَتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ وَ لا تَنْقُصْ مِنْ حَسَنَاتِنَا اللّٰهُمَّ وَ مَا اَعْطَيْتَنَا مِنْ عَطَاءٍ اَوْ فَضَّلْتَنَا بِهِ مِنْ فَضِيلَةٍ اَوْ اَكْرَمْتَنَا بِهِ مِنْ كَرَامَةٍ فَاَعْطِنَا مَعَهُ شُكْرا يَقْهَرُهُ وَ يَدْمَغُهُ وَ اجْعَلْهُ لَنَا صَاعِدا فِي رِضْوَانِكَ وَ فِي حَسَنَاتِنَا وَ سُؤْدَدِنَا وَ شَرَفِنَا وَ نَعْمَائِكَ [نَعْمَائِنَا] وَ كَرَامَتِكَ [كَرَامَتِنَا] فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ [اللّٰهُمَ]، وَ لا تَجْعَلْهُ لَنَا اَشَرا وَ لا بَطَرا وَ لا فِتْنَةً وَ لا مَقْتا وَ لا عَذَابا وَ لا خِزْيا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ اللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّا نَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَثْرَةِ اللِّسَانِ وَ سُوءِ الْمَقَامِ وَ خِفَّةِ الْمِيزَانِ اللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ لَقِّنَا حَسَنَاتِنَا فِي الْمَمَاتِ وَ لا تُرِنَا اَعْمَالَنَا حَسَرَاتٍ وَ لا تُخْزِنَا عِنْدَ قَضَائِكَ وَ لا تَفْضَحْنَا بِسَيِّئَاتِنَا يَوْمَ نَلْقَاكَ وَ اجْعَلْ قُلُوبَنَا تَذْكُرُكَ وَ لا تَنْسَاكَ وَ تَخْشَاكَ كَاَنَّهَا تَرَاكَ حَتَّى نَلْقَاكَ وَ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ بَدِّلْ سَيِّئَاتِنَا حَسَنَاتٍ وَ اجْعَلْ حَسَنَاتِنَا دَرَجَاتٍ وَ اجْعَلْ دَرَجَاتِنَا غُرُفَاتٍ وَ اجْعَلْ غُرُفَاتِنَا عَالِيَاتٍ . اللّٰهُمَّ وَ اَوْسِعْ لِفَقِيرِنَا مِنْ سَعَةِ مَا قَضَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ اللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى

مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ مُنَّ عَلَيْنَا بِالْهُدَى مَا اَبْقَيْتَنَا وَ الْكَرَامَةِ مَا اَحْيَيْتَنَا وَ الْكَرَامَةِ [وَ الْمَغْفِرَةِ] اِذَا تَوَفَّيْتَنَا وَ الْحِفْظِ فِيمَا بَقِيَ مِنْ عُمُرِنَا وَ الْبَرَكَةِ فِيمَا رَزَقْتَنَا وَ الْعَوْنِ عَلَى مَا حَمَّلْتَنَا وَ الثَّبَاتِ عَلَى مَا طَوَّقْتَنَا وَ لا تُؤَاخِذْنَا بِظُلْمِنَا وَ لا تُقَايِسْنَا بِجَهْلِنَا وَ لا تَسْتَدْرِجْنَا بِخَطَايَانَا وَ اجْعَلْ اَحْسَنَ مَا نَقُولُ ثَابِتا فِي قُلُوبِنَا وَ اجْعَلْنَا عُظَمَاءَ عِنْدَكَ وَ اَذِلَّةً فِي اَنْفُسِنَا وَ انْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا وَ زِدْنَا عِلْما نَافِعا وَ اَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ قَلْبٍ لا يَخْشَعُ وَ مِنْ عَيْنٍ لا تَدْمَعُ وَ مِنْ صَلاةٍ لا تُقْبَلُ اَجِرْنَا مِنْ سُوءِ الْفِتَنِ يَا وَلِيَّ الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ.

O Allah, Your determination is surely unavoidable, Your destiny is unavoidable, Your act is unavoidable, and there is no power and no might except with You. So, O Allah, whatever act You decide on us and whatever decree You make on us, (please do) grant us along with it patience that repels and fends it off and make it ascend for our good toward Your Pleasure so that it shall grow up our rewards, favors, tributes, honor, glory, boon, and dignity in this world as well as the world to come. And (please) do not lessen our rewards. O Allah, whatever donation You give us, whatever virtue You confer on us, whatever endowment You bestow on us, (please) grant us with it thanksgiving that repels and fends it off. And make it ascend for our good toward Your Pleasure, and ascend in our rewards, tribute, honor, Your boon, and Your honoring (us) in this world as well as the world to come. And (please) do not make it to be for us a source of evil, ungratefulness, seditious matter, hatred, torture, or disgrace in this world as well as the world to come. O Allah, we do seek Your protection against slips of tongues, evil situations, and lightness of the Scale.

O Allah, (please do) send blessings upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, make us meet our the rewards of good deeds at the hours of our death, do not show us the fruits of our deeds as nothing but regrets, do not disgrace us when You judge us, do not expose us because of our evildoings on the Day when we shall meet You, make our hearts remember You always and never forget You, make our hears fear You as if they can see You until we meet You, send blessings upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, change our evildoings into good deeds, make our good deeds to be grades, change our grades into

chambers (in Paradise), and make our chambers high. O Allah, (please do) expand the source of sustenance for our poor people from the expansion that You have taken upon Yourself to make. O Allah, (please do) send blessings upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad and endue us with true guidance as long as You grant us life, with a honor as long as You keep us alive, with forgiveness when You decide to cease our lifetime, with protection in the rest of our lifetime, with blessings in the sustenance that You give us, with help to carry out what You have burdened us with, and with steadfastness against what You have imposed on us. And do not punish us for our wrongdoings, do not treat us on basis of our lack of knowledge, do not draw us near to destruction gradually on account of our sins, make the best of our words to be firm in our hearts, make us to be great persons in Your view but humble ones in our own views, make that which You have taught us to benefit us, and increase us with useful knowledge. And I seek Your protection against a heart that does not submit (to You), an eye that does not shed tears (for fear of You), and a prayer that is not admitted (by You). (Please do) rescue us from the evil seditious matters, O Manager of this world and the world to come.

Ziyarah of Aminullah (The Trustee of Allah)

The Ziyarah of Aminullah is highly esteemed as is cited in all books of Ziyarah. In the word of ʻAllamah al-Majlisi, this form is the best in text and chain of authority. It is recommended to say it at all of the holy shrines.

Through considerable chain of authority, it is narrated on the authority of Jabir (ibn ʻAbdullah al-Ansari) on the authority of Imam al-Baqir (ʻa) that Imam Zayn al-ʼAbidin (ʻa), once, visited the holy tomb of Imam ʻAli (ʻa). He stood at the tomb, wept, and pronounced the following words:

السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اَمِينَ اللهِ فِي اَرْضِهِ وَ حُجَّتَهُ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ (السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ)، اَشْهَدُ اَنَّكَ جَاهَدْتَ فِي اللهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ وَ عَمِلْتَ بِكِتَابِهِ وَ اتَّبَعْتَ سُنَنَ نَبِيِّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ حَتَّى دَعَاكَ اللهُ اِلَى جِوَارِهِ فَقَبَضَكَ اِلَيْهِ بِاخْتِيَارِهِ وَ اَلْزَمَ اَعْدَاءَكَ الْحُجَّةَ مَعَ مَا لَكَ مِنَ الْحُجَجِ الْبَالِغَةِ عَلَى جَمِيعِ خَلْقِهِ اللّٰهُمَّ فَاجْعَلْ نَفْسِي مُطْمَئِنَّةً بِقَدَرِكَ رَاضِيَةً بِقَضَائِكَ مُولَعَةً بِذِكْرِكَ وَ دُعَائِكَ مُحِبَّةً لِصَفْوَةِ اَوْلِيَائِكَ مَحْبُوبَةً فِي اَرْضِكَ وَ سَمَائِكَ صَابِرَةً عَلَى نُزُولِ بَلائِكَ [شَاكِرَةً لِفَوَاضِلِ نَعْمَائِكَ ذَاكِرَةً لِسَوَابِغِ آلائِكَ] مُشْتَاقَةً اِلَى فَرْحَةِ لِقَائِكَ مُتَزَوِّدَةً التَّقْوَى لِيَوْمِ جَزَائِكَ مُسْتَنَّةً بِسُنَنِ اَوْلِيَائِكَ مُفَارِقَةً لِاَخْلاقِ اَعْدَائِكَ مَشْغُولَةً عَنِ الدُّنْيَا بِحَمْدِكَ وَ ثَنَائِكَ.

Peace be upon you, O trustee of Allah on His lands and argument of Allah against His servants. Peace be upon you, O Commander of the Faithful. I bear witness that you strove for the sake of Allah as it ought to be striven, acted upon His Book, and followed the instructions of His Prophet, peace of Allah be upon him and his Household, until Allah called you to be in His vicinity. So, He grasped you to Him by His will and put your enemies under the claim although you have inclusive claims against all of His creatures. O Allah, (please do) cause my soul to be fully tranquil with Your decrees, satisfied with Your acts, fond of mentioning and praying to You, bearing love for the choicest of Your intimate servants, beloved in Your lands and heavens, steadfast against the affliction of Your tribulations, thankful for Your graceful bounties, always bearing in mind Your incessant gifts, longing for the gladness of meeting You, supplied with piety for the day of Your rewarding, pursuing the morals of Your intimate servants, quitting the conducts of Your enemies, and distracted from this world by praising and thanking You.

The Imam (‘a) then put his cheek on the tomb and said:

اللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّ قُلُوبَ الْمُخْبِتِينَ اِلَيْكَ وَالِهَةٌ وَ سُبُلَ الرَّاغِبِينَ اِلَيْكَ شَارِعَةٌ وَ اَعْلامَ الْقَاصِدِينَ اِلَيْكَ وَاضِحَةٌ وَ اَفْئِدَةَ الْعَارِفِينَ مِنْكَ فَازِعَةٌ وَ اَصْوَاتَ الدَّاعِينَ اِلَيْكَ صَاعِدَةٌ وَ اَبْوَابَ الْاِجَابَةِ لَهُمْ مُفَتَّحَةٌ وَ دَعْوَةَ مَنْ نَاجَاكَ مُسْتَجَابَةٌ وَ تَوْبَةَ مَنْ اَنَابَ اِلَيْكَ مَقْبُولَةٌ وَ عَبْرَةَ مَنْ بَكَى مِنْ خَوْفِكَ مَرْحُومَةٌ وَ الْاِغَاثَةَ لِمَنِ اسْتَغَاثَ بِكَ مَوْجُودَةٌ [مَبْذُولَةٌ] وَ الْاِعَانَةَ لِمَنِ

اسْتَعَانَ بِكَ مَبْذُولَةٌ [مَوْجُودَةٌ] وَ عِدَاتِكَ لِعِبَادِكَ مُنْجَزَةٌ وَ زَلَلَ مَنِ اسْتَقَالَكَ مُقَالَةٌ وَ اَعْمَالَ الْعَامِلِينَ لَدَيْكَ مَحْفُوظَةٌ وَ اَرْزَاقَكَ اِلَى الْخَلائِقِ مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَازِلَةٌ وَ عَوَائِدَ الْمَزِيدِ اِلَيْهِمْ وَاصِلَةٌ وَ ذُنُوبَ الْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ مَغْفُورَةٌ وَ حَوَائِجَ خَلْقِكَ عِنْدَكَ مَقْضِيَّةٌ وَ جَوَائِزَ السَّائِلِينَ عِنْدَكَ مُوَفَّرَةٌ وَ عَوَائِدَ الْمَزِيدِ مُتَوَاتِرَةٌ وَ مَوَائِدَ الْمُسْتَطْعِمِينَ مُعَدَّةٌ وَ مَنَاهِلَ الظِّمَاءِ [لَدَيْكَ] مُتْرَعَةٌ اللّٰهُمَّ فَاسْتَجِبْ دُعَائِي وَ اقْبَلْ ثَنَائِي وَ اجْمَعْ بَيْنِي وَ بَيْنَ اَوْلِيَائِي بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ عَلِيٍّ وَ فَاطِمَةَ وَ الْحَسَنِ وَ الْحُسَيْنِ اِنَّكَ وَلِيُّ نَعْمَائِي وَ مُنْتَهَى مُنَايَ وَ غَايَةُ رَجَائِي فِي مُنْقَلَبِي وَ مَثْوَايَ.

O Allah, the hearts of those humbling themselves to You are fascinated, the paths of those desiring for You are open, the sings of those directing to You are evident, the hearts of those having recognition of You are resorting to You, the voices of those beseeching You are mounting up to You, the doors of responding to them are wide open, the prayer of him who speaks to You confidentially is responded, the repentance of him who turns to You modestly is admitted, the tear of him who weeps on account of fear from You is compassionated, the aid of him who seeks Your aid is available, the help of him who seeks Your help is obtainable, Your promises to Your servants are fulfilled, the slips of him who implore You to excuse him are forgivable, the deeds of those who act for You are preserved, Your sustenance to the creatures are descending from You, Your gifts for further conferrals are reaching them, the sins of those imploring Your forgiveness are forgiven, the requests of Your creatures are granted by You, the prizes of those begging You are offered, Your gifts for further conferrals are uninterrupted, the dining tables for those seeking Your feeding are prepared, and the springs of quenching their thirst are brimful. O Allah, (so) respond to my prayer, accept my thanksgiving for You, and join me to my masters, [I beseech You] in the name of Muhammad, Ali, Fatimah, Al-Hasan, and Al-Husayn. You are verily the only source of my boons, the ultimate goal of my wishes, and the target of my hope in my recourses and settlement.

In the book of Kamil al-Ziyarat, the following statements are added to this form of Ziyarah:

اَنْتَ اِلَهِي وَ سَيِّدِي وَ مَوْلايَ اغْفِرْ لِاَوْلِيَائِنَا وَ كُفَّ عَنَّا اَعْدَاءَنَا وَ اشْغَلْهُمْ عَنْ اَذَانَا وَ اَظْهِرْ كَلِمَةَ الْحَقِّ وَ اجْعَلْهَا الْعُلْيَا وَ اَدْحِضْ كَلِمَةَ الْبَاطِلِ وَ اجْعَلْهَا السُّفْلَى اِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

You are verily my God, Master, and Lord. (Please) forgive our friend, prevent our enemies against us, distract them from harming us, give prevalence to the Word of Truth and make it the supreme, and frustrate the word of falsehood and make it the lowliest. Verily, You have power over all things.

Imam al-Baqir (‘a) then added, “Indeed, any one of our adherents (Shi’ah) who pronounces these words at the tomb of Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a) or the tomb of one of the Imams (‘a) shall certainly have his prayer lifted up on a ladder of light, carrying the seal of the Holy Prophet’s ring, and it shall be kept so until it will be delivered to the Riser from Muhammad’s Household (namely, Imam al-Mahdi) who will receive the sayer of that prayer with good tidings, greetings, and honor.”

It is worth mentioning that the Ziyarah of Aminullah is considered one of the general forms of Ziyarah of Imam ‘Ali (‘a), one of the private forms of Ziyarah on the ‘Id al-Ghadir Day, and one of the comprehensive forms of Ziyarah that can be said at all the shrines of the Holy Imams.

Another Formula of Ziyarah on the Ghadir Day

This form of ziyarah has been mentioned in Iqbal al-A`mal by Sayyid Ibn Tawus who reported it from Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him).

اَللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَىٰ وَلِيِّكَ وَأَخِي نَبِيِّكَ وَوَزِيرِهِ وَحَبِيبِهِ وَخَلِيلِهِ وَمَوْضِعِ سِرِّهِ وَخِيَرَتِهِ مِنْ أُسْرَتِهِ وَوَصِيِّهِ وَصَفْوَتِهِ وَخَالِصَتِهِ وَأَمِينِهِ وَوَلِيِّهِ وَأَشْرَفِ عِتْرَتِهِ ٱلَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ بِهِ وَأَبِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِ وَبَابِ حِكْمَتِهِ وَٱلنَّاطِقِ بِحُجَّتِهِ وَٱلدَّاعِي إِلَىٰ شَرِيعَتِهِ وَٱلْمَاضِي عَلَىٰ سُنَّتِهِ وَخَلِيفَتِهِ عَلَىٰ أُمَّتِهِ سَيِّدِ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ

وَأَمِيرِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَقَائِدِ ٱلْغُرِّ ٱلْمُحَجَّلِينَ أَفْضَلَ مَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَىٰ أَحَدٍ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ وَأَصْفِيَائِكَ وَأَوْصِيَاءِ أَنْبِيَائِكَ اَللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَشْهَدُ أَنَّهُ قَدْ بَلَّغَ عَنْ نَبِيِّكَ صَلَّىٰ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ مَا حُمِّلَ وَرَعَىٰ مَا ٱسْتُحْفِظَ وَحَفِظَ مَا ٱسْتُودِعَ وَحَلَّلَ حَلالَكَ وَحَرَّمَ حَرَامَكَ وَأَقَامَ أَحْكَامَكَ وَدَعَا إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِكَ وَوَالَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَكَ وَعَادَىٰ أَعْدَاءَكَ وَجَاهَدَ ٱلنَّاكِثِينَ عَنْ سَبِيلِكَ وَٱلْقَاسِطِينَ وَٱلْمَارِقِينَ عَنْ أَمْرِكَ صَابِراً مُحْتَسِبا مُقْبِلاً غَيْرَ مُدْبِرٍ لاَ تَأْخُذُهُ فِي ٱللَّهِ لَوْمَةُ لائِمٍ حَتَّىٰ بَلَغَ فِي ذَٰلِكَ ٱلرِّضَا وَسَلَّمَ إِلَيْكَ ٱلْقَضَاء وَعَبَدَكَ مُخْلِصا وَنَصَحَ لَكَ مُجْتَهِدا حَتَّىٰ أَتَاهُ ٱلْيَقِين فَقَبَضْتَهُ إِلَيْكَ شَهِيداً سَعِيدا وَلِيّاً تَقِيّاً رَضِيّا زَكِيّاً هَادِياً مَهْدِيّا اَللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَيْه أَفْضَلَ مَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَىٰ أَحَدٍ مِنْ أَنْبِيَائِكَ وَأَصْفِيَائِكَ يَا رَبَّ ٱلْعَالَمِينَ

O Allah, (please do) send blessings upon Your friend, the brother of Your Prophet, his vizier, dear one, intimate friend, his trustee on his secrets, the favorite one among his family members, his successor, his choice, his dignitary, his courier, his best friend, the most honorable of the members of his household who believed in him, the father of his progeny, his spokesman who speaks with his argument, the door to his wisdom, the inviter to his code of law, the follower of his instructions, his representative on his people, the master of Muslims, the commander of the faithful, and the leader of the white-forehead group; (please, bless him) with the best blessings that You have ever bestowed upon any of Your creatures and upon Your select ones and Your Prophets' successors. O Allah, I bear witness that he conveyed all that which has been entrusted with him on behalf of Your Prophet, peace be upon him and his Household, conformed to that which has been kept with him, held that which has been commended to him, observed that which You have deemed lawful, forbade that which You have deemed unlawful, carried out Your laws, called unto Your course, he assisted Your saints, incurred the hostility of Your enemies, and strove against those who preached Your path, those who acted wrongly, and those who apostatized Your affair. In all these, he was steadfast, seeking Your pleasure, advancing, and never neglectful. No censure has ever precluded him from what he would do for Your sake until he attained Your satisfaction, relegated all matters to You, worshipped You sincerely, and acted sincerely and painstakingly for Your sake until death came upon

him. So, You grasped his soul to You while he was happy martyr, saint, pious, pleased, pure, guide, and well-guided. O Allah, (please do) bless Muhammad and bless him with the best blessings You have ever bestowed upon any of Your Prophets and select ones, O Lord of the worlds.

Ziyarah Of Imam Ali On The Night Of Maba'th (27th Rajab)

السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ آدَمَ خَلِيفَةِ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ نُوحٍ صَفْوَةِ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ اِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلِ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ مُوسَى كَلِيمِ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ عِيسَى رُوحِ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ مُحَمَّدٍ سَيِّدِ رُسُلِ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اِمَامَ الْمُتَّقِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا سَيِّدَ الْوَصِيِّينَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَصِيَّ رَسُولِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ عِلْمِ الْاَوَّلِينَ وَ الْآخِرِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا النَّبَأُ الْعَظِيمُ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا الصِّرَاطُ الْمُسْتَقِيمُ ، السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا الْمُهَذَّبُ الْكَرِيمُ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا الْوَصِيُّ التَّقِيُّ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا الرَّضِيُّ الزَّكِيُّ

Peace be upon you, O inheritor of Adam the vicegerent of Allah. Peace be upon you, O inheritor of Noah the choice of Allah. Peace be upon you, O inheritor of Abraham the intimate friend of Allah. Peace be upon you, O inheritor of Moses the spoken by Allah. Peace be upon you, O inheritor of Jesus the spirit of Allah. Peace be upon you, O inheritor of Muhammad the chief of Allah's Messengers. Peace be upon you, O commander of the faithful. Peace be upon you, O epitome of the pious ones. Peace be upon you, O chief of the Prophets' successors. Peace be upon you, O successor of the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds. Peace be upon you, O inheritor of the knowledge of the past and the coming generations. Peace be upon you, O Great News. Peace be upon you, O Straight Path. Peace be upon you, O noble, refined one. Peace be upon you, O pious successor (of the Prophet). Peace be upon you, O well-pleased, pure one.

السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا الْبَدْرُ الْمُضِيءُ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا الصِّدّيقُ الْاَكْبَرُ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا الْفَارُوقُ الْاَعْظَمُ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا السِّرَاجُ الْمُنِيرُ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اِمَامَ الْهُدَى السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا عَلَمَ التُّقَى السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حُجَّةَ اللهِ الْكُبْرَى السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا خَاصَّةَ اللهِ وَ خَالِصَتَهُ وَ اَمِينَ اللهِ وَ صَفْوَتَهُ وَ بَابَ اللهِ وَ حُجَّتَهُ وَ مَعْدِنَ حُكْمِ اللهِ وَ سِرّهِ وَ عَيْبَةَ عِلْمِ اللهِ وَ خَازِنَهُ وَ سَفِيرَ اللهِ فِي خَلْقِهِ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّكَ اَقَمْتَ الصَّلاةَ وَ آتَيْتَ الزَّكَاةَ وَ اَمَرْتَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَ نَهَيْتَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، وَ اتَّبَعْتَ الرَّسُولَ وَ تَلَوْتَ الْكِتَابَ حَقَّ تِلاوَتِهِ وَ بَلَّغْتَ عَنِ اللهِ وَ وَفَيْتَ بِعَهْدِ اللهِ وَ تَمَّتْ بِكَ كَلِمَاتُ اللهِ وَ جَاهَدْتَ فِي اللهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ وَ نَصَحْتَ لِلَّهِ وَ لِرَسُولِهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ وَ جُدْتَ بِنَفْسِكَ صَابِرا مُحْتَسِبا مُجَاهِدا عَنْ دِينِ اللهِ مُوَقِّيا لِرَسُولِ اللهِ طَالِبا مَا عِنْدَ اللهِ رَاغِبا فِيمَا وَعَدَ اللهُ

Peace be upon you, O shining full moon. Peace be upon you, O grandest veracious one. Peace be upon you, O greatest distinguisher (between the right and the wrong). Peace be upon you, O glowing lantern. Peace be upon you, O leader to the true guidance. Peace be upon you, O pattern of piety. Peace be upon you, O grand argument of Allah. Peace be upon you, O select and elite of Allah, trustee and choice of Allah, door to and argument of Allah, source and secret of Allah's judgment, guardian and keeper of Allah's knowledge, and envoy of Allah among His creatures. I bear witness that you performed the prayers, paid the zakat, enjoined the right, forbade the wrong, followed the Messenger, recited the Book as exactly as it must be recited, conveyed the messages of Allah, fulfilled your covenant with Allah, the Words of Allah a were accomplished by you, strove in Allah's way in the best manner, advised for the sake of Allah and for the sake of His Messenger peace be upon him and his Household, and sacrificed yourself with steadfastness, seeking Allah's reward, struggling for the defense of Allah's religion, protecting Allah's Messenger peace be upon him and his Household, seeking for that which is with Allah, and desiring for that which Allah has promised.

وَ مَضَيْتَ لِلَّذِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهِ شَهِيدا وَ شَاهِدا وَ مَشْهُودا فَجَزَاكَ اللهُ عَنْ رَسُولِهِ وَ عَنِ الْاِسْلامِ وَ اَهْلِهِ مِنْ صِدّيقٍ اَفْضَلَ الْجَزَاءِ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّكَ كُنْتَ اَوَّلَ الْقَوْمِ اِسْلاما وَ اَخْلَصَهُمْ اِيمَانا وَ اَشَدَّهُمْ يَقِينا وَ اَخْوَفَهُمْ لِلَّهِ وَ اَعْظَمَهُمْ عَنَاءً وَ اَحْوَطَهُمْ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ وَ

اَفْضَلَهُمْ مَنَاقِبَ وَ اَكْثَرَهُمْ سَوَابِقَ وَ اَرْفَعَهُمْ دَرَجَةً، وَ اَشْرَفَهُمْ مَنْزِلَةً وَ اَكْرَمَهُمْ عَلَيْهِ فَقَوِيتَ [قَوِيتَ] حِينَ وَهَنُوا وَ لَزِمْتَ مِنْهَاجَ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّكَ كُنْتَ خَلِيفَتَهُ حَقًّا لَمْ تُنَازَعْ بِرَغْمِ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَ غَيْظِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَ ضِغْنِ الْفَاسِقِينَ وَ قُمْتَ بِالْاَمْرِ حِينَ فَشِلُوا وَ نَطَقْتَ حِينَ تَتَعْتَعُوا وَ مَضَيْتَ بِنُورِ اللهِ اِذْ وَقَفُوا

You also sealed your life as martyr, a witness, and witnessed; so, may Allah reward you on behalf of His Messenger, Islam, and the people of Islam with the most favorite reward, for you are veracious. I bear witness that you were the first to embrace Islam, the most sincere in faith, the most confident, and you were the most Allah-fearing, the most steadfast (against ordeals for the sake of Islam), the most watchful for Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his Household, endowed with the most favorable merits, the foremost of everyone else in everything, the owner of the most elevated rank, the owner of the most honorable position, and the most respected (by Almighty Allah and His Messenger). Thus, you became stronger when they became weak and you abode by the course of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his Household. I also bear witness that you were the true vicegerent of him (i.e. the Holy Prophet); no one could ever compete with you in this position in spite of the existence of hypocrites, the despise of the unbelievers, and the malice of the wicked. You also managed the matters when they failed to do so, you spoke (the truth) when they stammered, and you carried on with the light of Allah when they stopped.

فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ فَقَدِ اهْتَدَى [هُدِيَ] كُنْتَ اَوَّلَهُمْ كَلاما وَ اَشَدَّهُمْ خِصَاما وَ اَصْوَبَهُمْ مَنْطِقا وَ اَسَدَّهُمْ رَأْيا وَ اَشْجَعَهُمْ قَلْبا وَ اَكْثَرَهُمْ يَقِينا وَ اَحْسَنَهُمْ عَمَلا ، وَ اَعْرَفَهُمْ بِالْاُمُورِ كُنْتَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ اَبا رَحِيما اِذْ صَارُوا عَلَيْكَ عِيَالا فَحَمَلْتَ اَثْقَالَ مَا عَنْهُ ضَعُفُوا وَ حَفِظْتَ مَا اَضَاعُوا وَ رَعَيْتَ مَا اَهْمَلُوا وَ شَمَّرْتَ اِذْ جَبَنُوا وَ عَلَوْتَ اِذْ هَلِعُوا وَ صَبَرْتَ اِذْ جَزِعُوا كُنْتَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابا صَبّا وَ غِلْظَةً وَ غَيْظا وَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْثا وَ خِصْبا وَ عِلْما لَمْ تُفْلَلْ حُجَّتُكَ وَ لَمْ يَزِغْ قَلْبُكَ وَ لَمْ تَضْعُفْ بَصِيرَتُكَ وَ لَمْ تَجْبُنْ نَفْسُكَ كُنْتَ كَالْجَبَلِ لا تُحَرِّكُهُ الْعَوَاصِفُ وَ لا تُزِيلُهُ الْقَوَاصِفُ

Hence, he who follows you has actually been led to the true guidance. You were the first to speak, the firmest in refuting the rivals, the most eloquent of them, the most apposite in opinions, the most courageous, the most confident of them, the best of them in deeds, and the most learned in affairs. For the believers, you were merciful father, and they were thus your dependents; so, you carried the burdens that they were too weak to carry, preserved that which they forfeited, conserved that which they neglected, prepared yourself for facing that which they were too coward to face, advanced when they were dismayed, and acted steadfastly when they became anxious. You were thus incessant torment on the unbelievers, and you were also rude and furious (on them). You rained (with mercy) on the believers, and you were fertile and source of knowledge for them. Your argument was never weak, your heart never deviated, your sagacity was never feeble, and your determination never cowered. You were as firm as mountain, since storms could never displace you and misfortunes could never move you.

كُنْتَ كَمَا قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ قَوِيّا فِي بَدَنِكَ مُتَوَاضِعا فِي نَفْسِكَ عَظِيما عِنْدَ اللهِ كَبِيرا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَلِيلا فِي السَّمَاءِ، لَمْ يَكُنْ لِاَحَدٍ فِيكَ مَهْمَزٌ وَ لا لِقَائِلٍ فِيكَ مَغْمَزٌ وَ لاَ لِخَلْقٍ فِيكَ مَطْمَعٌ وَ لا لِاَحَدٍ عِنْدَكَ هَوَادَةٌ يُوجَدُ الضَّعِيفُ الذَّلِيلُ عِنْدَكَ قَوِيّا عَزِيزا حَتَّى تَأْخُذَ لَهُ بِحَقِّهِ وَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ عِنْدَكَ ضَعِيفا [ذَلِيلا] حَتَّى تَأْخُذَ مِنْهُ الْحَقَّ الْقَرِيبُ وَ الْبَعِيدُ عِنْدَكَ فِي ذَلِكَ سَوَاءٌ شَأْنُكَ الْحَقُّ وَ الصِّدْقُ وَ الرِّفْقُ وَ قَوْلُكَ حُكْمٌ وَ حَتْمٌ وَ اَمْرُكَ حِلْمٌ وَ عَزْمٌ وَ رَأْيُكَ عِلْمٌ وَ حَزْمٌ [وَ جَزْمٌ] اعْتَدَلَ بِكَ الدِّينُ وَ سَهُلَ بِكَ الْعَسِيرُ وَ أُطْفِئَتْ بِكَ النِّيرَانُ وَ قَوِيَ بِكَ الْاِيمَانُ وَ ثَبَتَ بِكَ الْاِسْلامُ وَ هَدَّتْ مُصِيبَتُكَ الْاَنَامَ فَاِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَ اِنَّا اِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ لَعَنَ اللهُ مَنْ قَتَلَكَ ، وَ لَعَنَ اللهُ مَنْ خَالَفَكَ وَ لَعَنَ اللهُ مَنِ افْتَرَى عَلَيْكَ وَ لَعَنَ اللهُ مَنْ ظَلَمَكَ وَ غَصَبَكَ حَقَّكَ وَ لَعَنَ اللهُ مَنْ بَلَغَهُ ذَلِكَ فَرَضِيَ بِهِ

You were as exactly as described by Allah's Messenger peace be upon him and his Household who said about you that you are strong in your body, modest in yourself, great in the view of Allah, imposing in the earth, and lofty in the heavens. None could ever find fault with you, none could ever speak evil of you, you never desired for any of the created beings, and you were never

lenient (unfairly) to anyone. The weak, humble one was strong and mighty in your view until you give him back his right, and the strong, mighty one was weak in your view until you take the others' rights from him. The near and the remote were equal in your view. Your habit was to be true, honest, and kind, your words were ruling and determination, your custom was forbearance and fortitude, and your view was knowledge and firmness. At your hands, the religion became even, the difficult became easy, the fires were extinguished, the faith became strong, Islam became steady, and the calamity of losing you undermined all people. Surely, we are Allah's and to Him we shall surely return. Curse of Allah be upon him who slew you, curse of Allah be upon him who mutinied against you, curse of Allah be upon him who forged lies against you, curse of Allah be upon him who wronged you and usurped your right, and curse of Allah be upon him who, when was informed about this, was pleased with it.

إِنَّا اِلَى اللهِ مِنْهُمْ بُرَآءُ لَعَنَ اللهُ أُمَّةً خَالَفَتْكَ وَ جَحَدَتْ وِلايَتَكَ وَ تَظَاهَرَتْ عَلَيْكَ وَ قَتَلَتْكَ وَ حَادَتْ عَنْكَ وَ خَذَلَتْكَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ النَّارَ مَثْوَاهُمْ وَ بِئْسَ الْوِرْدُ الْمَوْرُودُ اَشْهَدُ لَكَ يَا وَلِيَّ اللهِ وَ وَلِيَّ رَسُولِهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ بِالْبَلاغِ وَ الْاَدَاءِ [وَ النَّصِيحَةِ] وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّكَ حَبِيبُ [جَنْبُ] اللهِ وَ بَابُهُ وَ اَنَّكَ جَنْبُ [حَبِيبُ] اللهِ وَ وَجْهُهُ الَّذِي مِنْهُ يُؤْتَى وَ اَنَّكَ سَبِيلُ اللهِ وَ اَنَّكَ عَبْدُ اللهِ وَ اَخُو رَسُولِهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ اَتَيْتُكَ زَائِرا لِعَظِيمِ حَالِكَ وَ مَنْزِلَتِكَ عِنْدَ اللهِ وَ عِنْدَ رَسُولِهِ مُتَقَرِّبا اِلَى اللهِ بِزِيَارَتِكَ رَاغِبا اِلَيْكَ فِي الشَّفَاعَةِ، اَبْتَغِي بِشَفَاعَتِكَ خَلاصَ نَفْسِي مُتَعَوِّذا بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ هَارِبا مِنْ ذُنُوبِيَ الَّتِي احْتَطَبْتُهَا عَلَى ظَهْرِي فَزِعا اِلَيْكَ رَجَاءَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّي

Verily, we disavow all those before Allah. Curse of Allah be upon the group that disagreed with you, denied your (Divinely commissioned) leadership, aided each other against you, slew you, deviated from you, and disappointed you. All praise be to Allah, for Hellfire is the abode of those and evil the place to which they are brought. I bear witness for you, O Intimate servant of Allah and loyalist of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his Household, that you did convey and carry out (your mission). And I bear witness that you are the beloved of Allah and the door to Him, you are the Side of Allah and His Face from which one can

come to Allah, you are Allah's way, you are Allah's servant, and you are the brother of His Messenger, peace be upon him and his Household. I have thus come to visit you because you enjoy a magnificent position and standing with Allah and with His Messenger. So, I seek nearness to Allah through my visit to you and I desire that you will intercede for me. Through your intercession for me, I hope for redemption of myself, I seek refuge with you against Hellfire, I am fleeing from my sins that I have overburdened myself with them, and I resort to you in the hope of my Lord's mercy.

اَتَيْتُكَ اَسْتَشْفِعُ بِكَ يَا مَوْلايَ اِلَى اللهِ وَ اَتَقَرَّبُ بِكَ اِلَيْهِ لِيَقْضِيَ بِكَ حَوَائِجِي فَاشْفَعْ لِي يَا اَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اِلَى اللهِ فَاِنِّي عَبْدُ اللهِ وَ مَوْلاكَ وَ زَائِرُكَ وَ لَكَ عِنْدَ اللهِ الْمَقَامُ الْمَعْلُومُ وَ الْجَاهُ الْعَظِيمُ وَ الشَّأْنُ الْكَبِيرُ وَ الشَّفَاعَةُ الْمَقْبُولَةُ اللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ صَلِّ عَلَى عَبْدِكَ وَ اَمِينِكَ الْاَوْفَى وَ عُرْوَتِكَ الْوُثْقَى وَ يَدِكَ الْعُلْيَا وَ كَلِمَتِكَ الْحُسْنَى وَ حُجَّتِكَ عَلَى الْوَرَى وَ صِدّيقِكَ الْاَكْبَرِ سَيِّدِ الْاَوْصِيَاءِ وَ رُكْنِ الْاَوْلِيَاءِ وَ عِمَادِ الْاَصْفِيَاءِ اَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ يَعْسُوبِ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَ قُدْوَةِ الصِّدّيقِينَ وَ اِمَامِ الصَّالِحِينَ، الْمَعْصُومِ مِنَ الزَّلَلِ وَ الْمَفْطُومِ مِنَ الْخَلَلِ وَ الْمُهَذَّبِ مِنَ الْعَيْبِ وَ الْمُطَهَّرِ مِنَ الرَّيْبِ اَخِي نَبِيِّكَ وَ وَصِيِّ رَسُولِكَ وَ الْبَائِتِ عَلَى فِرَاشِهِ وَ الْمُوَاسِي لَهُ بِنَفْسِهِ وَ كَاشِفِ الْكَرْبِ عَنْ وَجْهِهِ

I have come to you, O my master, seeking your intercession for me before Allah and seeking nearness to Him through you so that He may settle my needs; so, (please) intercede for me, O Commander of the Faithful. Verily, I am the slave of Allah and your servant and visitor, and you enjoy a distinguished position with Allah, a great rank, a big standing, and an admitted right of intercession. O Allah, (please do) send blessings upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad and send blessings upon Your servant, Your most faithful trustee, Your firmest handle, Your highest Hand, Your excellent Word, Your argument on the people, Your grandest veracious one, the chief of the Prophets' successors, the reliance of the saints, the support of the elite ones, the commander of the faithful, the leader of the pious ones, the example of the veracious ones, the pattern of the righteous ones, the one protected against flaws, the one saved from defects, the one cleared

from faults, the one purified from doubts, the brother of Your Prophet, the successor of Your Messenger, the one who replaced him when he spent that night instead of him, the one who sacrificed his soul for him, the one who always relieved him in harsh situations,

الَّذِي جَعَلْتَهُ سَيْفا لِنُبُوَّتِهِ وَ مُعْجِزا لِرِسَالَتِهِ وَ دِلالَةً وَاضِحَةً لِحُجَّتِهِ وَ حَامِلا لِرَايَتِهِ وَ وِقَايَةً لِمُهْجَتِهِ وَ هَادِيا لِأُمَّتِهِ وَ يَدا لِبَأْسِهِ وَ تَاجا لِرَأْسِهِ وَ بَابا لِنَصْرِهِ وَ مِفْتَاحا لِظَفَرِهِ حَتَّى هَزَمَ جُنُودَ الشِّرْكِ بِأَيْدِكَ وَ أَبَادَ عَسَاكِرَ الْكُفْرِ بِأَمْرِكَ وَ بَذَلَ نَفْسَهُ فِي مَرْضَاتِكَ وَ مَرْضَاةِ رَسُولِكَ وَ جَعَلَهَا وَقْفا عَلَى طَاعَتِهِ وَ مِجَنّا دُونَ نَكْبَتِهِ حَتَّى فَاضَتْ نَفْسُهُ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ فِي كَفِّهِ وَ اسْتَلَبَ بَرْدَهَا، وَ مَسَحَهُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ وَ أَعَانَتْهُ مَلائِكَتُكَ عَلَى غُسْلِهِ وَ تَجْهِيزِهِ وَ صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ وَ وَارَى شَخْصَهُ وَ قَضَى دَيْنَهُ وَ أَنْجَزَ وَعْدَهُ وَ لَزِمَ عَهْدَهُ وَ احْتَذَى مِثَالَهُ وَ حَفِظَ وَصِيَّتَهُ وَ حِينَ وَجَدَ أَنْصَارا نَهَضَ مُسْتَقِلا بِأَعْبَاءِ الْخِلافَةِ مُضْطَلِعا بِأَثْقَالِ الْإِمَامَةِ

and the one whom You chose to be the sword of his (i.e. the Prophet) Prophethood, the miracle of his (Divine) mission, the lucid indication of his arguments, the bearer of his pennon, the protector of his soul, the guide of his nation, the power of his might, the crown of his head, the door to his victory, and the key to his triumph, until he defeated the armies of polytheism by Your aid, terminated the warriors of atheism by Your permission, exerted all efforts to win the pleasure of You and Your Messenger, devoted all of his efforts to the obedience to him, and made of himself armor to protect him from any misfortune, until the soul of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his Household, departed his body while his face was in the hand of Ali, who thus felt its coldness, and rubbed his face therewith. And Your angels helped him bathe and prepare his body for burial. He then performed [the ritual] prayer for him, buried his body, settled his debts, fulfilled his promises, made his covenants, followed his example, and abode by his will. When he could find supporters, he undertook the burdens of the position of leadership (caliphate) and assumed the loads of Imamate.

فَنَصَبَ رَايَةَ الْهُدَى فِي عِبَادِكَ وَ نَشَرَ ثَوْبَ الْاَمْنِ فِي بِلادِكَ وَ بَسَطَ الْعَدْلَ فِي بَرِيَّتِكَ وَ حَكَمَ بِكِتَابِكَ فِي خَلِيقَتِكَ وَ اَقَامَ الْحُدُودَ وَ قَمَعَ الْجُحُودَ وَ قَوَّمَ الزَّيْغَ وَ سَكَّنَ الْغَمْرَةَ وَ اَبَادَ الْفَتْرَةَ وَ سَدَّ الْفُرْجَةَ وَ قَتَلَ النَّاكِثَةَ وَ الْقَاسِطَةَ وَ الْمَارِقَةَ وَ لَمْ يَزَلْ عَلَى مِنْهَاجِ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ وَ وَتِيرَتِهِ وَ لُطْفِ شَاكِلَتِهِ وَ جَمَالِ سِيرَتِهِ مُقْتَدِيا بِسُنَّتِهِ مُتَعَلِّقا بِهِمَّتِهِ مُبَاشِرا لِطَرِيقَتِهِ وَ اَمْثِلَتُهُ نَصْبُ عَيْنَيْهِ يَحْمِلُ عِبَادَكَ عَلَيْهَا وَ يَدْعُوهُمْ اِلَيْهَا اِلَى اَنْ خُضِبَتْ شَيْبَتُهُ مِنْ دَمِ رَأْسِهِ

He thus hoisted the flag of true guidance among Your servants, spread the dress of security in Your lands, extended justice among Your creatures, judged according to Your Book among your beings, executed the laws, suppressed unbelief, rectified the deviation, mollified the criticism, eradicated lethargy, blocked the gap, killed the preachers, the wrongdoers, and the apostates, kept on following the course and tradition of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him and his Household, kept on following his excellent pattern, kept on following his superb practice, he imitated his convention, held fast to his morale, and copied his way (of treating with matters). And he always noticed the Prophet's deeds as if they were before his eyes; he thus ordered Your servants to copy these deeds and invited them to imitate them until his white beard was dyed with the blood of his head.

اللّٰهُمَّ فَكَمَا لَمْ يُؤْثِرْ فِي طَاعَتِكَ شَكّا عَلَى يَقِينٍ وَ لَمْ يُشْرِكْ بِكَ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ صَلِّ عَلَيْهِ صَلاةً زَاكِيَةً نَامِيَةً يَلْحَقُ بِهَا دَرَجَةَ النُّبُوَّةِ فِي جَنَّتِكَ وَ بَلِّغْهُ مِنَّا تَحِيَّةً وَ سَلاما وَ آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ فِي مُوَالاتِهِ فَضْلا وَ اِحْسَانا وَ مَغْفِرَةً وَ رِضْوَانا اِنَّكَ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْجَسِيمِ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

O Allah, as he never preferred a dubious matter to a certain one for the sake of obeying You and never associated any one with You even for a winking of an eye, please send upon him growing and increasing blessings due to which he may join the position of Prophethood in Your Paradise, and(please) convey our greetings and compliments to him and, on account of our allegiance to his leadership, please grant us from You favor, kindness, forgiveness, and pleasure. You are verily the Lord of enormous favor. [please

do that] in the name of Your mercy, O most merciful of all those who show mercy.

Imam Al-Sadiq Visits the Tomb of Imam Ali

Sayyid ‘Abd al-Karim ibn Tawus has reported the following from Safwan al-Jammal:
During my journey with him to al-Kufah for meeting Abu-Ja’far al-Mansur the ‘Abbasid ruler, Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (‘a) asked me to make our camels kneel down at a certain place, saying, “This is the tomb of my grandfather, the Commander of the Faithful.”

As I made the camels kneel down there, he rode off, bathed himself, changed his clothes, took off his shoes, and ordered me to imitate him in everything. He then directed towards the hillock of Najaf (al-dhakwah), saying, “*If you walk in short steps and nod your head to the ground, you shall be given one hundred thousand rewards for each step, one hundred thousand sins shall be erased from your sins, you shall be elevated one hundred thousand ranks, one hundred thousand of your requests shall be granted, and you shall be granted the rewards of all veracious individuals who died and all martyrs whom were slain*.”

Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) then walked with tranquility and gravity, and I followed him, pronouncing statements of glorification and sanctification of Almighty Allah and confession of His Oneness until we reached the hillocks there. He stopped there, looked to the right and the left, sketched something on the ground with his stick, and asked me to look for the signs of the tomb. As I did, I could notice the traces of the tomb of Imam ‘Ali (‘a). Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) immediately shed tears down his face and said these words:

اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَ اِنَّا اِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُوْنَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا الْوَصِيُّ الْبَرُّ التَّقِيُّ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا النَّبَأُ الْعَظِيمُ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا الصِّدّيقُ الرَّشِيدُ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا الْبَرُّ الزَّكِيُّ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَصِيَّ رَسُولِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا خِيَرَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ اَجْمَعِينَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّكَ حَبِيبُ اللّٰهِ وَ خَاصَّةُ اللّٰهِ وَ

خَالِصَتُهُ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَلِيَّ اللهِ وَ مَوْضِعَ سِرِّهِ وَ عَيْبَةَ عِلْمِهِ وَ خَازِنَ وَحْيِهِ

To Allah we belong and to Him is our return. Peace be upon you, O successor(of the Prophet), righteous, and pious. Peace be upon you, O Great News. Peace be upon you, O veracious and right-directing one. Peace be upon you, O righteous and pure. Peace be upon you, O Successor of the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds. Peace be upon you, O choice of Allah over all creatures. I bear witness that you are verily Allah's beloved, elite, and select. Peace be upon you, O intimate servant of Allah, center of His secrets, store of His knowledge, and keeper of His Revelation.

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) then threw himself on the tomb and said these words:

بِاَبِي اَنْتَ وَ اُمِّي يَا اَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِاَبِي اَنْتَ وَ اُمِّي يَا حُجَّةَ الْخِصَامِ بِاَبِي اَنْتَ وَ اُمِّي يَا بَابَ الْمَقَامِ بِاَبِي اَنْتَ وَ اُمِّي يَا نُورَ اللهِ التَّامَّ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّكَ قَدْ بَلَّغْتَ عَنِ اللهِ وَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ مَا حُمِّلْتَ وَ رَعَيْتَ مَا اسْتُحْفِظْتَ وَ حَفِظْتَ مَا اسْتُودِعْتَ وَ حَلَّلْتَ حَلالَ اللهِ وَ حَرَّمْتَ حَرَامَ اللهِ وَ اَقَمْتَ اَحْكَامَ اللهِ وَ لَمْ تَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللهِ وَ عَبَدْتَ اللهَ مُخْلِصا حَتَّى اَتَاكَ الْيَقِينُ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْكَ وَ عَلَى الْاَئِمَّةِ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ .

May Allah accept my father and mother as ransoms for you, O Commander of the Faithful! May Allah accept my father and mother as ransoms for you, O argument in controversies! May Allah accept my father and mother as ransoms for you, O door to the (elevated) position! May Allah accept my father and mother as ransoms for you, O utter light of Allah! I bear witness that you have conveyed all that which you were ordered to convey from Allah and from Allah's Messenger, may Allah's peace be upon him and his Household, attended to that which was kept with you, kept that which was stored with you, decided as lawful all that which Allah has deemed lawful, decided as unlawful all that which Allah has deemed unlawful, carried out the decrees of Allah, never exceeded the limits of Allah, and worshipped Allah sin-

cerely until death came upon you. May Allah send blessings upon you and upon the Imams who came after you!

Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) then stood up and offered a number of units of prayer at the side of the Imam’s head. He then said to me (i.e. Safwan), “Whoever visits Amir al-Mu’minin with this form of Ziyarah and then offers the like of this prayer shall return home while all his sins are forgiven, all his efforts are accepted, and will have the rewards of all the angels who visit this tomb recorded for him.”

I asked, “Do you mean the reward of all the angels who visit this tomb?”
The Imam (‘a) answered, “Yes, I do. Each night, this tomb is visited by seventy thousand tribes of angels.”
“How many is a tribe of angels?” asked I.
“Each tribe consists of one hundred thousand angels,” answered the Imam (‘a).
The Imam (‘a) then left the place waling back but his face was still to the grave direction, uttering the following words:

يَا جَدَّاهْ يَا سَيِّدَاهْ يَا طَيِّبَاهْ يَا طَاهِرَاهْ لا جَعَلَهُ اللهُ آخِرَ الْعَهْدِ مِنْكَ وَ رَزَقَنِي الْعَوْدَ اِلَيْكَ وَ اَلْمَقَامَ فِي حَرَمِكَ وَ الْكَوْنَ مَعَكَ وَ مَعَ الْاَبْرَارِ مِنْ وُلْدِكَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْكَ وَ عَلَى الْمَلائِكَةِ الْمُحْدِقِينَ بِكَ

O grandfather! O master! O pure! O infallible! May Allah not cause this(visit of mine) to be the last of my compliments to you. May He grant me the opportunity to visit you again, to reside at your holy shrine, and to be included with you and with the righteous ones among your sons! May Allah send blessings upon you and upon the angels surrounding you!

I then said to him, “O master! May I inform our acquaintances in al-Kufah about this and lead them to this tomb?”
The Imam (‘a) answered in the affirmative and gave me a sum of money to construct the tomb.

Another Ziyarah

In Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, the following narration has been quoted from the book of al-Mazar al-Qadim on the authority of our master, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a):

Accompanying my father, I went for visiting the tomb of my grandfather, Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib ('a), in al-Najaf. My father stopped at the holy tomb, wept, and said the following:

السَّلامُ عَلَى اَبِي الْاَئِمَّةِ وَ خَلِيلِ النُّبُوَّةِ وَ الْمَخْصُوصِ بِالْاُخُوَّةِ السَّلامُ عَلَى يَعْسُوبِ الْاِيمَانِ وَ مِيزَانِ الْاَعْمَالِ وَ سَيْفِ ذِي الْجَلَالِ السَّلامُ عَلَى صَالِحِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ وَارِثِ عِلْمِ النَّبِيّينَ الْحَاكِمِ فِي يَوْمِ الدِّينِ السَّلامُ عَلَى شَجَرَةِ التَّقْوَى السَّلامُ عَلَى حُجَّةِ اللهِ الْبَالِغَةِ وَ نِعْمَتِهِ السَّابِغَةِ وَ نِقْمَتِهِ الدَّامِغَةِ السَّلامُ عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ الْوَاضِحِ وَ النَّجْمِ اللائِحِ وَ الْاِمَامِ النَّاصِحِ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ اَنْتَ وَسِيلَتِي اِلَى اللهِ وَ ذَرِيعَتِي وَ لِي حَقُّ مُوَالاتِي وَ تَأْمِيلِي فَكُنْ لِي شَفِيعِي اِلَى اللهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ فِي الْوُقُوفِ عَلَى قَضَاءِ حَاجَتِي وَ هِيَ فَكَاكُ رَقَبَتِي مِنَ النَّارِ وَ اصْرِفْنِي فِي مَوْقِفِي هَذَا بِالنُّجْحِ وَ بِمَا سَاَلْتُهُ كُلَّهُ [كُلِّهِ] بِرَحْمَتِهِ وَ قُدْرَتِهِ اَللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِي عَقْلا كَامِلا وَ لُبّا رَاجِحا وَ قَلْبا زَكِيّا وَ عَمَلا كَثِيرا وَ اَدَبا بَارِعا وَ اجْعَلْ ذَلِكَ كُلَّهُ لِي وَ لا تَجْعَلْهُ عَلَيَّ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

Peace be upon the father of the Imams, the friend of the Prophethood, and the one exclusively granted the fraternity (of the Holy Prophet). Peace be upon the chief of true faith, the Scale of the deeds and the sword of the Lord of Majesty. Peace be upon the most righteous of the believers, the inheritor of the knowledge of the Prophets, and the judge on the Judgment Day. Peace be upon the Tree of Piety. Peace be upon Allah's conclusive argument, His flowing boon, and His forceful punishment. Peace be upon the clear-cut path, the patent star, and the advising leader. May Allah's mercy and blessings be upon him. You are verily my means and my course to Allah. And I enjoy the right of my loyalty to you and my hoping for you. So, (please) be my intercessor before Allah the Almighty and All-majestic as regards the settlement of my request, which is the release of my neck from Hellfire. And

(please) seal my current situation with success and with response to all that which I have asked for, out of His mercy and power. O Allah, (please do) grant me an utter intellect, sharp aptitude, pure heart, much deed, and fabulous courtesy, and make all that for my good and do not make it against me, [I beseech You] in the name of Your mercy, O most Merciful of all those who show mercy!

Another Ziyarah

Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported that Imam ‘Ali ibn Muhammad al-Naqi (al-Hadi) instructed the following:

At the tomb of Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a), you may say the following:

السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَلِيَّ اللهِ اَنْتَ اَوَّلُ مَظْلُومٍ وَ اَوَّلُ مَنْ غُصِبَ حَقُّهُ صَبَرْتَ وَ احْتَسَبْتَ حَتَّى اَتَاكَ الْيَقِينُ فَاَشْهَدُ اَنَّكَ لَقِيتَ اللهَ وَ اَنْتَ شَهِيدٌ عَذَّبَ اللهُ قَاتِلَكَ بِاَنْوَاعِ الْعَذَابِ وَ جَدَّدَ عَلَيْهِ الْعَذَابَ جِئْتُكَ عَارِفا بِحَقِّكَ مُسْتَبْصِرا بِشَأْنِكَ مُعَادِيا لِاَعْدَائِكَ وَ مَنْ ظَلَمَكَ اَلْقَى عَلَى ذَلِكَ رَبِّي اِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ يَا وَلِيَّ اللهِ اِنَّ لِي ذُنُوبا كَثِيرَةً فَاشْفَعْ لِي اِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاِنَّ لَكَ عِنْدَ اللهِ مَقَاما مَعْلُوما وَ اِنَّ لَكَ عِنْدَ اللهِ جَاها وَ شَفَاعَةً وَ قَدْ قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى وَ لا يَشْفَعُونَ اِلا لِمَنِ ارْتَضَى

Peace be upon you, O intimate servant of Allah. You are the first to have been oppressed and the first to have had his right usurped. You, nevertheless, acted patiently, seeking the reward of Allah, until death came upon you. I thus bear witness that you met Allah as martyr. May Allah torture him who killed you with the various kinds of torture and may He renew torture for him ceaselessly. I have come to you, recognizing your right, acknowledging your position, and bearing enmity against your enemies and against those who wronged you. I, by Allah’s willing, will meet my Lord carrying these principles. O intimate servant of Allah, I have (committed) numerous sins; so, (please) intercede for me before your Lord, for you verily enjoy a famous rank with Allah and you have verily enjoyed a high status and intercession

with Allah. Allah, the All-exalted, has said (in this respect), And they do not intercede except for him whom He accepts.

- 1. 'Umdat Al-Matalib, pp. 44.
- 2. Ibn Khillaka, Wafiyyat Al-A'yan 1:418.
- 3. Quoted from Sirat Amir Al-Mu'minin by Mufti Ja'far Husayn; translated into English by Sayyid Tahir Bilgrimi.
- 4. To recognize the right of Imam Ali ('a) is to acknowledge his divinely commissioned leadership, to carry out the obligation of obedience to him, and to accept him as the actual successor of the Holy Prophet (S).
- 5. Ziyarah (visitation) holds two meanings; first, it means pilgrimage to a holy place, and second; it refers to the formulas to be said at the holy shrines and to be addressed at the person buried there.
- 6. The following pages are quoted from Shaykh 'Abbas Al-Qummi's Mafatih Al-Jinan; the English version.

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